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[A COLD RECEPTION.]

THAT YOUNG PERSON.

By the Author of "Basil Rivington's Romance," etc.

CHAPTER III.

Sigh on thou breeze—ye birdies sing;
For me your sweetest notes are vain,
Oh nought on earth can pleasure bring,
For he will ne'er come back again.

Why is it parting is such a pain to us? Why does it hurt us so, not only to leave our relations and friends but to forsake the inanimate objects that time or intimate association has endeared to us?

Because there is in man a dread awe of his destiny and the earthly changes.

The separations that meet us here in life's pilgrimage do but foreshadow another change, do but recall to us that there must come a day when we shall suffer the greatest of all transformations—the separation from all, the rending asunder of soul and body. We, now so full of health and strength, shall sleep in the grave, and in a little while the busy whirl of life will go on just as well without us. Of this dim, distant future all earthly partings are a feeble type.

It was Janet Clive's wild, passionate nature, her intense longing for love and sympathy, that made it so very cruel for her to leave London, which contained all she had left to care for, and it was her proud, independent spirit that made her so dread the prospect of living at Prosington with the Misses Dent.

There is something so galling, so humiliating in being suddenly thrust upon the charity of people you have never seen, of eating not only pastry and sweets at their expense, but bread, butter, beef and mutton, etc., of feeling yourself bound to listen to long homilies, to agree with opinions you detest, to become simply the humble echo of people often ten

times inferior to yourself, because they have money and you have not.

There are so few people in this world of ours who can bestow a favour without making the receiving of it twenty times more bitter than would have been the going without it.

Janet had not been long in the lodgings in Great College Street.

She had come to them in trouble. They were neither grand nor pretty, but in them she had been waited on by willing hands, she had owed naught but kindness to any one, and so when, in the early dawn of the raw November morning, she sat eating her last meal off the unsteady round table, and Susan Crapp, with eyes slightly redder and voice a trifle softer than usual, besought her to make a good breakfast, she felt that even without her father, without the luxuries of her past life, if she could but have lived on in that humble shelter, cheered by Gerald's visits, protected by his love, she would have been well content.

She was so utterly alone, such a poor, solitary wail, when she took her seat in the corner of a railway carriage, when the shrill whistle sounded, and the steaming engine bore the train rapidly out of the station, where the faithful Susan stood waving her handkerchief, and as the dreary, dreary hours rolled slowly on, each bearing her farther and farther from Gerald, nearer and nearer to the new life that lay before her, Janet's heart grew very heavy.

At six o'clock the train stopped at Munton, where the Misses Dent had instructed their young kinswoman to descend.

She had written to tell them the day and hour of her coming, and though no reply had come, yet as she alighted on the platform she looked anxiously around, fully expecting someone was waiting there for her, but the only human object in the small, uncomfortable station was a sleepy station-master, who stared vacantly at Janet and her three boxes, as though he had not the remotest idea what to do with them.

Our heroine gave one glance at the receding train,

then resigned her ticket from between her half-frozen fingers, and asked:

"How far is it to Prosington?"

"Rather better nor eight miles," was the encouraging reply. "Did ye want to go there, miss?"

"Isn't there any—I mean, has not any one been to meet me?"

"There hasn't been a creature nigh the station from Prosington to-day."

Poor Janet! This was beyond her fears, she felt ready to sit down and cry.

"How do people get to Prosington from here?" she asked.

"Well," answered the station master, deliberately, "that depends, some walks and some rides." "But how do they ride? What do they go in?" impatiently.

"Why, in a cart or a shay, to be sure. Where do ye want to go in Prosington, Miss?"

"To Miss Dent's. Do you know her?"

"I should think I did, indeed," returned the man, emphatically, "oldish party, speaks pious like, and carries a bag o' tracks."

Janet sighed as she acknowledged to herself the undoubted truth of this description. "I wrote to tell her I was coming to-day. I can't understand why she hasn't sent."

"When did you write?" asked the official, who either from pity for the girl's desolate state, or from purely natural causes, was gradually waking up.

"Three days ago."

"Then you take my word on it, Miss, as she's never got the letter. All the letters for Prosington comes here, and unless the folks comes for 'em, they don't get 'em but twice a week. Miss Dent'll have your letter to-morrow, Miss."

"But how am I to get there?" said Janet, weary, sinking down on her nearest trunk, for the man's arguments, if they exonerated her relatives from neglect, left it very doubtful how she was to reach there.

"I don't know, I'm sure!" then as his lantern fell

on the girlish face, so sad and touching beneath its crisp bonnet, a bright thought struck him. "Tell you what, miss, you stop in and have a bit of a rest, my missus is a famous hand at helping people out o' fixes."

Janet followed him to the little college at the end of the platform. He pushed open a door and they entered a cosy kitchen, where the fire burnt brightly, and the jem things stood ready on the table, a rosy faced young woman, who had been making toast, rose up to meet them, and while her husband explained matters, she drew a chair close to the fire, and made Janet sit down, and poured her out a cup of tea, and as Miss Clive warmed her feet on the fender, and sipped her refreshing tea, she began to believe there were more pleasant people in the world than one thought for after all.

"Now Mary," lass, said the station-master, who was much livelier at home than on the cold platform, "what's Miss to do? How's she to get to Prosington. She can't walk, that's certain, besides there's the boxes."

Mary thought a little, her husband waiting in perfect certainty she would solve the difficulty somehow, and Janet only too glad to have some one to talk thought for her. Mary did not keep them long in suspense.

"Why, John, how stupid on us, why, there's Josh Billings as comes into Manton regular every Thursday, he can drive miss back as easy as not."

"But he goes at five, and it's past six now."

"Yes, but his horse cast a shoe, and he has had to wait at the forge, he won't be starting afore seven, John. You just step round to the bus and tell him."

John was off like a shot. When he returned he reported that John would start in half an hour, and would look round for "Miss"—Josh kept his word; he was a tall, spare, black-haired man, of great renown in Prosington, as keeper of the only shop in that highly commercial village. It was his custom to come into Manton every week for the market, and this heavy cart into which Janet and her boxes were hoisted, contained curdries, stores of bacon, bread, cheese, and groceries. Mary arranged quite a comfortable seat with the three trunks, and lent "Miss" a great shawl to keep off the cold, which Josh was to return on his next journey. The husband and wife waited to see the east off with his load, and then they went back to their bright fireside, and Janet envied them.

The conductor was not talkative, and she was too tired to regret it. Wrapped in Mary's warm shawl, in a sheltered corner of the car, she fell asleep. When she awoke they were still jogging along at the same trot, which would have been slow for a funeral procession, only instead of lanes they had reached a narrow, irregular street, with houses on either side.

"Are we nearly there?" Janet asked.

"We be."

"Are there many people in Prosington?"

"There be enough."

They drew up before a neat white house, with a long garden and a green gate, to which Josh, who was occupied in descending the boxes, unceremoniously pointed, so Janet opened it, and trapping up the gravel path, reached a door, which was barred and fortified in such a fashion as to inspire a very bad opinion of the honesty of Prosington. At this door Janet knocked, and then waited breathlessly for the space of five minutes. No answer, no light in any of the windows, no sign of human habitation. She knocked again. The same result; and when Josh deposited the last box at her feet, she was still waiting.

"They be gone to bed," was the prompt discovery of this genius. "I'll soon rouse 'em up." Accordingly he gave such a thundering rat-tat, that no human being, unless stone deaf, could have continued to slumber. Apparently the Misses Dent were not stone deaf, for a female head protruded from an upper window, and an agitated voice inquired: "Is the house on fire?"

"Please come right down and see, mum," was the unsatisfactory reply.

Another interval of suspense, a great fumbling at locks and bars, and the door was thrown open by an individual, who struck Janet as being a striking resemblance to one of the witches in Macbeth. A tall, lank figure, hastily smothered in a variety of wraps, a nightcap that would protrude itself from the shawl that was destined to cover it, some scanty grey hair that floated in the wind, and a lean, yellow looking hand that supported a flickering candle, which every second threatened to go out. The apparition stared in blank amazement at Josh and his companion.

"Mr. Billings, what does this mean? I had hoped you were a child of grace, not a son of wrath, to disturb a pious household at such an hour."

"As to that, mum, I expect we are all wrath at

times, and I can assure you I was getting uncommonly so, a-standing here before your door, which isn't very warm. As to what I want, I've brought you the young lady as I found at Manton."

Janet stepped forward.

"Did you not get my letter, Miss Dent. I am Janet Clive."

"Janet Clive."

"We didn't expect you at all. We never had your letter. Whatever made you start before you received our reply? It was very imprudent."

"It seems to me, mum," said Josh, who had carried the boxes into the passage during this dialogue, "as it'd be more prudent for you to take the young lady in, and do the rest of the talking somewhere where one does not feel the wind so keen. As to me, my horse 'll be tired of waiting. Good night, mum! Good night, miss!"

He pulled the door after him, and Miss Dent and Janet were left standing in the passage.

"As you have some," observed the former, "in so unexpected a manner, you must be prepared to find things not quite in order. In a pious household like this I trust much is suddenly wrong. Still, there are minute details."

She began to mount a steep stone staircase, and her weary guest followed her its length, and then down a long stone corridor, which, like the front court, seemed made without an end.

At last they came to a door, which Miss Dent opened, and motioned to Janet to enter. The room she thus disclosed to view was very large and dreary, with three long windows draped in faded ginger-coloured curtains.

There were certain of this same about the bed, which was about the dimensions of a funeral couch. The paper was chocolate-coloured, and the carpet too. The wind hissed noisily in the windows.

The room was very cold, and the e was a damp, mouldy small about it, as though it had not been inhabited for years.

Miss Dent lighted a very diminutive candle in a very large candlestick, extended two limp fingers to Janet, checked her when she would have spoken by the formal observation, "We will converse to-morrow," and glided into the stone corridor to resume doubtless the calm, the impassioned sleep that had been interrupted by the untimely arrival of her young cousin.

Left to herself, Janet gave a long, frightened glance round the room, and wondered if ever anything on earth could make it seem like home to her. It was most imperfectly lighted by the solitary candle, and in a nervous fright Janet began to imagine a hundred different dangers that might be concealed in the gloomy corners.

Who had been the last inhabitant of that funeral-looking bed? Had any one died between those dingy ginger curtains? Those fearful noises that she heard even and anon—were they rats? or, if not, what else? If anything really did happen, and she screamed very loud, would any one hear her?

Just then the candle gave every sign of going out, and Janet hustled into bed, pulled the clothes over her head, and cried as though her heart would break.

Bitter even beyond her expectation had she found this commencement of eating the bread of charity, or, should we say, trying to eat it? since neither soup nor sup had yet been offered her. Not one kind word had been spoken to her—nay, she had rather been reproached.

Oh, how she longed for her lover, for the dead father who had loved her so well, or even kindly Susan Crapp! But they were far away.

One slept peacefully in his grave, little recking his child's trouble, and no cry of hers could reach the other two.

Worn out by sorrow, fatigue and disappointment, the best of Nature's gifts came to her—sleep.

When she awoke it was growing late, and some one had already entered her room, for the first thing that greeted her eyes were her own boxes, standing modestly in the corner. The ginger curtains were looped back, and a cheery gleam of winter sunshine was struggling to make its way into the room.

Ah, what a difference a little sunshine makes to us when we are young.

Janet dressed herself almost gaily. The fears of the past night had fled.

As to her reception, it certainly might have been warmer, but perhaps Miss Dent was not demonstrative, and it certainly could not have been agreeable to have been roused out of her first sleep on a bitter winter's night to welcome a stranger, though why the worthy lady should have been in her first sleep at ten was a question Miss Clive really could not solve.

She had not been long dressed, and was wondering how she should find her way through the endless passages, when a knock came at the door, and a neat maid-servant entered.

Her name was Emily Duse, and the former title being too worldly to please her present employers, she generally went by the second, which cheerful sound was greatly preferred by the Misses Dent, as already shadowing forth its owner's future state and momentarily reminding her of the fate of all living.

Dust was not plumb, in proof of which she wore a smart cap with blue ribbons.

It may be remarked in passing that she was one of a series of children of wrath taken by the Misses Dent to be trained for "better things," training to which they generally did justice by committing matrimony, thereby securing a home and a partner for life, both very well in their way, but we doubt if they were the objects intended by the sisters when they raised their noses heavenwards and murmured "better things."

Dust stared hard at Janet, as persons to whom a strange face is a novelty are very apt to stare. Perhaps she wondered if the young lady had come there for the same end as herself, but if so she kept the wonder to herself, for she only said, demurely:

"Please, miss, will you come downstairs?"

And Janet followed her through the same journey as she had taken so wearily the night before, till they came to an upper floor, where Dust modestly retreated, leaving Janet in every sense of the word standing on strange ground.

The room was spacious, she saw that at a glance, since although it contained a table that would have seated forty persons in comfort, some dozen chairs, and a gigantic side-board, it had a remarkably bare and desolate appearance.

To make that room cozy would have been a hard task; it was specially adapted for flirtation, since from one corner of the room it would have been utterly impossible to hear anything said in either of the other three.

In two upright, high-backed chairs, at a given distance from the hearth rug, sat two upright ladies, about the ages of sixty-five and seventy.

They both had grey hair, yellow, shrivelled-looking faces, and small bird-like eyes.

They both wore plain black dresses, extremely scanty, and caps of lugubrious black net, and it was only the remembrance of the large proportions of the apparition that enabled Janet to decide which was Miss Dent and which was Miss Grizzel.

As regards Miss Jemima, she could not have been more than sixty, and was regarded as quite juvenile by her sisters.

She was supposed to have a hankering after the world, though in what it consisted—except in the fact of her being very fond of eating, and a report that forty years before, a young man had thought of proposing to her, and then altered his mind and didn't—it would have been hard to say.

Anyhow there was a great difference between Jemima and her sisters.

Her hair was of that shade of white brown which rarely or never turns grey.

She had a pair of washed-out blue eyes, was very active, and generally superintended the household affairs, while the others worked for "better things." Being considered too young for the scanty black gown, she had one of exactly the same fashion in chocolate-colour, and her cap had a little blonde about it.

She was impressed with a great sense of her inferiority of the other two, and whereas they invariably expressed themselves in the plural number, she was humbly content with the singular.

Somehow, despite her youth and worldliness, Jemima was under the most alluring of the two.

Janet's spirits went down to zero, as she slowly approached the three women—Jemima stood with the bell-rope in her hand—which made not the slightest advance to meet her. There was something about them so damping to her impulsive spirit, it almost seemed to her as if they never could have been young, as though they must always have appeared as she saw them, and partaking deeply of neither joy nor sorrow, had just lived on, not wearing out in honest work of heart and brain, but gradually wrestling with time.

Janet reached Miss Dent's side, and offered her hand tremblingly enough.

"Good morning," said Miss Dent, slowly—no one expressed themselves at Prosington—"We hope you are quite well—your cousins—Grizzel and Jemima."

Both these ladies in turn put out their hand, then Jemima rang the bell.

"Miss Clive's breakfast, Dust."

"We breakfast at eight," said Miss Dent, sententiously. "Another morning we shall hope to see you downstairs at half-past seven."

"We shall hope to see you downstairs at half-past seven!" echoed Grizzel.

Jemima said:

"Certainly," slightly at a loss to know why they wished to look at her half-an-hour before breakfast.

Dust brought in a small tray and set it down on the corner of the table.

It was hard to eat with six strange eyes upon her, but Janet had tasted nothing since the cup of tea the station master's rosy wife had given her; so she made an effort and sat down to her first meal at the *Retreat*.

It did not take long; meals were quickly over at the "Retreat," Miss Dent regarding them as waste of time. There was always just enough for everyone, but never too much; had anyone chanced to have a better appetite than usual, or had a stray guest dropped in matters would have been difficult, but such contretemps never arrived: no chance visitors trespassed on Miss Dent's hospitality, and the daily routine of life at the "Retreat" was not calculated to be appetising.

A very small piece of fried bacon, a slice of bread and another of bread and butter, formed Miss Clive's morning portion, supplemented by a cup of weak tea.

When it was finished, Miss Grizzel put a skein of thread on Janet's lissom fingers, and commenced to wind rapidly. Having thus secured her presence and Miss Jemima being perched within earshot, the following conversation took place. Miss Dent, who constantly referred to a sheet of black-edged paper, that Janet afterwards guessed to be Gerald's letter, in right of seniority, commenced:

"I think your name is Jane?"

"This was a preliminary; Janet modestly corrected the mistake.

"Janet! Dear me, Jane would have been much more sensible, why ever did they task on the other letter?"

"How old are you, Janet?"

"Eighteen."

For her very life she could not have given a longer answer. The cross-examination already tortured her.

"And this Mr. Duncan—no Duncan," referring to the letter, "who wrote to us is a friend of yours?"

Gerald had not mentioned his engagement, thinking her cousin's heart would be more drawn to Janet if they fancied her all their own; wounded by the coldness of her welcome, the girl was in no mood to tell her secret now.

"He was one of papa's best friends."

"Is he very old?" hazarded Jemima, rashly.

"Jemima!" said Miss Dent reprimandy.

"Jemima!" echoed Miss Grizzel.

"Not very!" answered Janet.

The cousins' idea of age differing somewhat from hers, they settled in their own minds that the gentleman in question must be the contemporary of Jemima.

"I hope you have been well taught, Janet?" said Miss Dent, earnestly.

"I'm afraid I don't know many things very well," said Janet, hesitatingly, "I have learnt French and Italian, I can sing, and paint flowers a little."

"Vanity?" said Miss Dent.

"Shocking," returned Miss Grizzel.

"How odd!" concluded Jemima.

Janet felt so desolate, she longed so for affection that she craved even the love of those faded, withered women. She could have thrown herself at their feet and implored them to like her just a little, the tears came welling up in her dark eyes, and she said flatly:

"But I'll never talk French or Italian to you if you don't like them; I dare say I shall soon forget them."

"I hope you will soon learn 'better things,'" said her eldest cousin, rather apoposed.

No inverted commas and capital letters can do justice to the intense emphasis, Miss Dent laid on those two words, "better things."

"And you know you can always sing in 'shape,'" put in Miss Grizzel.

Janet tried to look pleased; the cotton was finished, and another skein commenced, and so the morning wore tediously on.

CHAPTER IV.

It is surprising how fast people get on in the world, how many friends they make, and what hosts of acquaintances, if only they be rich.

Perhaps rich people really are more agreeable than poor ones.

It is so easy to be fascinating, gay and charming; if one is safe from the petty trials of poverty, and that most wearisome of all struggles—namely, to make both ends meet.

Jonathan Wild had this happiness. Born to influence throughout his life, he had been an eminently successful man.

Whatever he touched seemed to prosper. He continued to apply himself to business when other men would have retired content, and in consequence, long before he had reached the allotted term of existence,

he was a millionaire, and one of the merchant princes of England.

But there is an old-fashioned proverb, that "a skeleton is in every closet," and it is very few people with whom all succeeds.

Fortunate beyond his dreams in money matters, Mr. Wild had his trials, and heavy ones.

His sons—heirs to the wealth he had toiled so hard to gain—were taken from him in early boyhood, and his wife, a graceful, fragile creature, always delicate, some months after the birth of their youngest child, a girl, sunk into a confirmed invalid. All that could be attempted was done.

The merchant left his affairs in the charge of a trusted manager, and travelled with his treasure from one celebrated spring to another, till when they had been years away from England, and she was still no better, the physicians shook their heads and told her husband it was of no avail.

She was in no danger, she might live to be old, but the spine was injured, and she would never walk again.

And so he took her home—her and her child—home to the stately mansion in Grosvenor Gardens, where there was every luxury and servants to obey her slightest wish.

He showered all that wealth could buy upon his darling, but he could not give her health.

She lived on—little seen by strangers, little known by the great world in which she dwelt—never free from pain, yet always patient, always contented, from her sofa, the presiding spirit, the softening influence of that great establishment.

She had been an invalid for nine years, and her daughter Rosamond was nearing twenty when we introduced them to your notice a few months after Janet Clive's arrival at Prosington.

It was a beautiful afternoon in early spring, that the mother and child were alone in the bright, cheerful boudoir that Mr. Wild had fitted up for his wife. The April sunshine peeped in through the Venetian blinds, lighting up the furniture of the palest shade of blue, and shining on the face of the invalid on her sofa and of Rosamond, as she sat on a low chair at her side. In spite of her sorrow and ill health, Mrs. Wild looked far less than her real age, which was forty-seven. Her forehead was broad and open, as yet unfurrowed by time. Her large clear blue eyes had an expression of peace and repose rare after a long sojourn in this tumultuous world. Her features were small and delicate, and her soft brown hair crowned by a square of point lace, was as yet untouched by grey. Despite the mildness of the weather, she wore a dress of black velvet, warm and rich, and a large fire burnt in the grate.

The daughter did not resemble her, although she had the same fair skin, and luxuriant hair. Rosamond was tall and altogether on a larger scale. She had a round, dimpled face, a rosy mouth, often open to display her pretty teeth, a retroussé nose and a pair of merry brown eyes. She had no claim to beauty, yet her face was pretty and her manners pleasant and pleasing. An only child, an acknowledged heir, accustomed from her cradle to flattery and attention, with an invalid mother and an adoring father; it was only owing to a frank, generous disposition, a peculiarly sweet temper, that she still remained simple and unaffected, or as the merchant often called her, an unsophisticated pet.

She had never left her parents. A faithful governess had been with her ever since her return to England, and the most celebrated professors London could produce, had aided her efforts. When Rosamond's education was completed, a widowed sister of her father came to make her home at Grosvenor Gardens, and the merchant emerging from the retirement he had so long courted, mingled once more with the gay world, to introduce his child. Invitations were showered on the young heiress. Chaperoned by her aunt, she tasted the sweets of society. Many who hated trade and sneered at commerce were not ashamed to pay court to Miss Wild, nor to appear at the splendid entertainments by which her father returned the hospitality shown her.

Rosamond loved gaiety. Lively and animated, she seemed formed to shine in a crowd. She liked attention, and she received plenty. More than one title had been offered her, and the merchant would have been well pleased to hear her called "My Lady," but apparently she was not ambitious, for she unhesitatingly refused the proposed honour, and two seasons had come and gone and she was still as sporting men were pleased to phrase it, "on the lists."

Mrs. Wild grieved over this, not for any worldly motive, not for herself. She knew too well how bitterly she would miss Rosamond, when she left her for another house, but she understood her daughter as perhaps no other did.

She knew that beneath her easy, careless exterior she had deep, strong feelings, that she was capable of a warm affection; as the heiress to a million

many would seek her, not for what she was, but for what she had.

The mother would have rejoiced to see her child marry one really worthy of her, rather than remain the highest prize in the matrimonial market.

Something of this she had been saying to Rosamond on that spring afternoon, as she plied the cause of a young country squire of good family and moderate fortune, who was one of the most ardent of Miss Wild's admirers.

"I cannot see what you dislike in him, Rosa."

"Mamma, I should be moped to death. We should hate each other before we had been married a year."

He is very good tempered and clever, and amusing, and I am sure he is very fond of you."

Rosamond shrugged her shoulders. "He comes to see you every day for twenty minutes. He asks if you are no better, describes the weather, and wishes he was back in the country, then he looks at the clock, takes up his hat, shakes hands, and departs, having been, I quite own, very agreeable. Oh, mother, I would marry Sir Thomas tomorrow, if only I could be sure our days would only last twenty minutes."

"Rosamond!"

"I can't help it, mother; that is just as long as Sir Thomas's conversation lasts; after that he has but two subjects left—horses and dogs; he hates London, and his one object in life is to live and die at Danton."

"It is a beautiful place, judging from the photograph he showed me of it."

"Very, but scenery is not all one wants. I hate hunting, and that is the staple amusement of Danton. Sir Thomas and I should have a surfeit of each other's society. He would try to teach me the names of all his dogs—which I should never remember—and I should try to keep him awake after dinner by singing. These would be our respective vocations. Neither of us would ever succeed, and one would incessantly reproach the other with our failure!"

"Rosamond," said her mother, very gently, taking the girl's hand in her own this one. "I don't like to hear you talk like this. At your age it is unnatural. Besides, no woman should ever scoff at love; even if she be unable to accept it. Do you know, my darling, sometimes I think you only take this tone of mockery to hide your real feeling; is it so, Rosa?"

"I have no feelings as to Sir Thomas," answered Rosa, evasively, "excepting that I would like him to go back to Danton, to his horses and dogs."

A shade passed over her mother's face, and the girl cried hastily, as though to atone for her pell-mell:

"Oh, mother, dear, I do so wish I had a sister, or that one of my little brothers had lived just to save me from all this misery. I don't mean that I should like to be poor—it must be horrid to look at every sovereign before you spend it—but I am tired of being pointed out as Mr. Wild's heiress; the moment any one asks to be introduced to me I feel sure he has heard of my expectations, and would like to share them!"

"What can make you so distrustful, Rosa?"

The girl did not answer for a moment. She was twisting the gold chain at her neck into all sorts of knots.

At last she said, softly, a rich colour flushing her cheeks:

"And can't you see, mother. Don't you understand there is another side? Anyone who really love—I mean liked me, and wasn't very rich, mightn't tell me so for fear of its being thought he wanted the money."

Mrs. Wild kissed her tenderly, but she was troubled.

Rosamond's words almost suggested some secretleaning, some hidden fancy.

May came bringing with it the heiress's twentieth birthday, which Mr. Wild had determined to celebrate by a ball, surpassing in splendour and elegance all his efforts of the previous season. For himself he had little pleasure in such scenes, but he loved to lavish enjoyment on his child.

And so the invitations were sent out, and on the appointed night strings of carriages repaired to Grosvenor Gardens, and the merchant smiled at the thought of the lofty names that the next addition of the "Morning Post" would chronicle as his guests.

Never perhaps had Rosamond appeared to more advantage than when she stood with her aunt in the ball-room, waiting to receive the first arrivals.

She wore a floating dress of soft shimmering silk of some misty pink hue, trimmed here and there with costly lace, and looped with large white daisies.

The same flowers nestled in her soft hair, and on her neck and arms gleamed strings of large pearls, worth in themselves a small fortune.

Jonathan Wild was proud of his daughter that night.

To his fond eye she equalled the fairest and most noble born who graced the assembly.

Among the guests was a tall, distinguished-looking man, with wavy brown hair and hazel eyes. Many remarked him, and not a few inquired his name. He did not seem well known to the general company, but the host was peculiarly cordial to him, introducing him to many fair partners as :

" My friend, Mr. Duncan."

It was late before Mr. Duncan came face to face with the heroine of the night, and as he made the usual congratulations, a close observer might have noticed that Rosamond's cheeks turned a deeper crimson and her voice had lost its gay, mocking sound as she answered him.

" I am afraid I am too late to secure a dance. You must have promised them all long ago."

Rosamond glanced at her tablets, just as though she did not know that she had expressly reserved a place for him.

" I am not engaged for the next," she answered, lightly.

The band struck up, and they took their places. It should have been a proud moment for Gerald Duncan when he had the merchant's heiress on his arm, an honour that many men richer and higher far in rank than himself had coveted in vain. Did he rejoice at his success, or was he thinking of another girl younger and fairer than Rosamond, and whom he had first met in scenes as gay as those in which he now danced to the well-known strains of the Mabel waltz?

He, too, looked well that night. To his manly figure evening dress was peculiarly becoming, and the harsh expression of his mouth had relaxed a little. If he had been born to riches—if he had not had to fight his own way in life—trampling many softer feelings under foot as he did so—perhaps he might have been a better and a happier man.

It was almost a silent dance.

Gerald made one or two light observations, but Rosamond's answers were short, and given at random. Her bright gaiety seemed to have deserted her. She was confused and ill at ease.

Years before Gerald's father had been Jonathan Wild's chosen friend.

Their children had been initiated. The high-spirited, daring boy of fourteen had been the special champion, protector, and patron of the pretty child of eight.

Changes came. Rosamond was only twelve years old when Mr. Duncan died, and then a separation sprang up between her and Gerald. He entered her father's office as clerk, and gave his whole time and thought to his future success in life, and she became involved in all the numberless accomplishments and vigilant training needed to transform her into a fashionable young lady.

Step by step Gerald advanced in his mercantile career.

His sole aim seemed the pursuit of riches. He never forgot that his father and Mr. Wild had started in life as equals, notwithstanding the subsequent embarrassments of the one and the vast wealth of the other, and instead of imitating the love of ease and the reckless generosity of the one, he trod patiently and warily in the prudent, business-like course of the other.

" He was already Jonathan Wild's confidential clerk," people began to say.

He would one day be his partner, and the millionaire, whose own sons had gone to a better inheritance, took a warm interest in the child of the man who had found life one long failure.

Rosamond was eighteen, and Gerald twenty-four, when they met again. In the handsome, reserved man, whose dignified manners and rare gravity contrasted so strongly with the gay vivacity of fashion, she recognised the bold, courageous boy of other days.

The story of his struggles, his independent spirit, and never-failing energy, as told by her father, exalted him in her eyes to a hero. The old friendship, so long smothered, revived fierce and strong. It grew to a sentiment stronger and warmer.

The heiress gave her heart to her father's clerk. She loved him with the earnest purpose concealed beneath her usual careless manner, and she firmly resolved to marry only him.

She kept her secret well, her father and aunt did not dream of it. Her gentle mother did not even suspect it when she pleaded the case of the unfortunate Sir Thomas, and as to Gerald himself, ambitious as he was, his dreams did not at first soar to the hand of Rosamond. He liked Mr. Wild, he knew it was to his interest to do so, and so he accepted every invitation to his house, and diligently made himself agreeable to every one there. He remembered the heiress as a pretty childish friend, but he never thought of asking her to be more.

He ignored the past, or seemed to do so, and treated

her with as ceremonious a politeness as though they had made their acquaintance in a ball room.

Then came a time when all his best and higher feelings awoke—when he asked Janet Clive to be his wife. That might have been a turning point in his life, for in spite of all that came after, he really loved her. Her glorious beauty fascinated him, and he was proud of the passionate affection she lavished on him. He had no relations to share his happiness, the Wilds were his oldest friends. What more natural than he should confide his secret to them. He remembered well how he went there one evening to dinner, full of his purpose, and how Rosamond saluted him when they chanced to be tête-à-tête on his abstraction, and asked him why he had been there so seldom of late.

" Do you really wish to know, Miss Wild?" he had repeated.

" Yes; is it a great secret?"

" Very, for it concerns the happiness of my life."

And then to his surprise she had grown deathly pale, and her voice was strangely agitated as she said: " Tell me it."

(To be Continued.)

WE FOUR!

Beyond yon sunny reaches,
Where earliest violets blow,
A clump of stately beeches
Roofed our play-haunt long ago;
A slender rivulet, rippling down
The glade, with laugh and song,
Set all our play to music, in
That summer sweet and long.

The sand-bank, leaning over,
Drop shadows in our nook
And screened our sylvan studio—
The clay-bed by the brook;
In rustling waves, against our walls
The woodland shadows rolled,
And all our floors were sprinkled with
The sunshin's sifted gold.

One century woven maple,
With branches broad and strong,
Barred out the prying suns and rains
With leafy gates of song;
And all beneath the greenwood tree,
Despite of suns and showers,
We had for courtly company—
The birds, and bees, and flowers!

Here busily, with patient toil,
We fashioned, day by day,
The vague foreshadowings of our dreams
And ideals—wrought in clay;
We moulded with untutored skill
A hundred grotesque things—
Fay, gnome, a Par with ready pipe,
An angel, minus wings.

We four: Ah me, how many of
Our glad quartette to-day
Find that our lives are writ in sand,
Our idols are but clay?
Roy, Alice, Will, and Marjorie—
Our scattered household band—
Each shapes a separate destiny
With toiling brain and hand!

Beyond the trackless, shining sea
One, rich and famous grown,
Moulds his immortal dreams of Art
In pure Carrara stone;
One treads the storied halls of state,
And one—sweet Marjorie—
Beside her happy hearth-stone sits,
With children at her knee!

And one—oh, far and wearily, since
That summer glad and long,
By rugged ways her feet have climbed
The mystic heights of song:
Wild, empty shadows lure her on—
She follows, but to find
Who plucks the laurel leaf must leave
The Rose of Love behind.

E. A. B.

THE MYSTERY OF PERFUME.

No one has yet been able to analyse or demonstrate the essential action of perfume. Gas can be weighed, but no scents.

The smallest known creatures—the very monads of life—can be caught by a microscope lens, and made to deliver up the secrets of their organisation;

but what is it that emanates from the pouch of the musk-deer that fills a whole space for years and years with its penetrating odour—an odour that an infinite number of extraneous substances can carry on without diminishing its size or weight—and what is it that the warm summer air brings to us from the flowers, no man has yet been able to determine. So fine, so subtle, so imponderable, it has eluded both our most delicate weights and measures, and strongest lenses.

If we come to the essence of each odour, we should have an enormous stride forward both in hygiene and in chemistry, and none would profit more than the medical profession if it could be conclusively demonstrated that such an odour proceeded from such and such a cause; as we already know of sulphur, sulphuric hydrogen, ammonia and the like.

SCIENCE.

INFLUENCE OF CHEMICAL FERTILISERS ON POTATOES AND GRAPES.

A SECOND volume on this subject has recently appeared in France, written by Professor Ville, whose early experiments on the effect of various artificial manures attracted so much attention among agriculturists some years ago. In his first book, M. Ville gave a large number of engravings of plants, reproduced from photographs, exhibiting the influence of his so-called complete fertiliser, composed of nitrogenised matter, phosphate of lime, potassa, and lime, and noting the facts that, by the use of this compound, the yield of wheat per acre was more than double that obtained when nitrogenised manure alone was furnished, the ratio being about 46 to 20. When mineral manure alone was employed, the crop fell to 16, and finally, in earth without manure, the yield was represented by II. Applying these experiments to the potato and the vine, Professor Ville's recent volume, shows the astonishing influence of potassa. On the potato his complete fertiliser, when used, gave a yield of 35,300 lbs. per 2.5 acres; a like area yielded 25,960 lbs., nitrogenised matter being absent; and with phosphate absent, the yield was 32,780 lbs. When the potassa was removed, these figures fell to 16,500 lbs. With lime absent, the yield determined was 29,700 lbs., and with no manure at all, 7,700 lbs.

A NEW PROCESS FOR PRESERVING WOOD.—A new process for preserving wood from fire and decay has lately been invented. It consists first in kiln-drying the wood, which deprives it of all moisture and much of its volatile turpentine and other inflammable matter; it is then put into suitable cylinders, in which lime and water, with sulphurous acid gas, are forced into the pores of the wood under considerable pressure; the wood is then removed, dried, and is ready for use. The chemistry of the process consists in the formation of a soluble sulphate of lime by means of the sulphurous acid and the lime; this crystallises as a bisulphite, which oxidises, and is converted into the sulphate of lime or gypsum. As this is an exceedingly insoluble salt, it is not easily removed from the pores of the wood, and not only by its presence protects it as a non-conductor of heat, but deoxidises all matters which are likely to prove objectionable as ferments.

NEW CALEDONIA NICKEL.—Through the explorations of M. Garnier, a green mineral is now yielded, consisting of hydrosilicate of nickel, and magnesia, which appears destined to acquire considerable industrial importance. The mineral is found in the midst of very abundant masses of serpentine at various points of the island, and in association with euphotites, diorites, amphibolites, and other magnesian rocks. Sometimes this combination of nickel shows itself on other rocks in the form of a fine green covering; at others, it penetrates the rocks and covers them intensely; and again it is found in both filaments and nodules. As might be expected, the nickel is accompanied by iron, cobalt, and chromium, almost invariably. The metallurgical treatment proposed by MM. Christophe and Bouillet is quite simple. The material dissolved in hydrochloric acid is precipitated by lime under form of a nearly pure nickel oxide. Reduction by charcoal easily gives a metal 99 per cent. fine, incomparably purer than that obtained from the sulphurised and arsenious ores hitherto employed. It is not, however, in the free state that the metal is best used. As combined with copper in the proportion of 15 per cent. nickel against 85 of copper, a white malleable and very fine alloy is produced, excellently suited for all metallurgical manipulations.



[THE ARRIVAL OF UNCLE GEORGE.]

TRUE WORTH.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE reader must not suppose that Susan Scott or her now worthy husband had been forgotten. She, at least, has a part to play in this drama of domestic life, far from unimportant, but her cue has not yet been reached.

Mr. Arnold had continued to manifest a deep interest in her welfare, and was an occasional visitor at her house, always carrying with him some substantial token of his regard for herself or her children, although she never knew why he took so deep an interest in her welfare, save, as he had told her, that he knew her mother, and for her sake would befriend her, a promise he had most faithfully kept.

As for her husband, he had several conversations with Mr. Benson, concerning him, and evidently contemplated some measures for his advantage, when he was satisfied that his reformation was sincere.

About two weeks before the occurrences transpired as detailed in the last chapter, Mr. and Mrs. Arnold were returning from church alone, for they had left the children at home on that day, and had preferred to walk, as the weather was so pleasant, instead of using their carriage.

As they turned down South Street they were met at the corner by Mr. George Arnold, who was leading two children, the living pictures of health and innocent happiness.

Behind them was a couple neatly and genteelly dressed. The woman possibly might have been thirty summers, and even now might have been called beautiful. The man was a fine, healthy, hearty, pleasant-looking person, and seemed evidently very proud of his pretty wife and handsome, well-dressed children.

They were deeply engaged in conversation, and as they passed Mr. and Mrs. Arnold, the former took off his hat with great deference to his uncle. The movement caused Mrs. Arnold to raise her eyes, and they met those of the mother of the children.

In an instant a crimson blush suffused her face, and there was a pause—a momentary hesitation as if she would stop and speak to the female, but a second thought decided her, and she passed on, trembling however, and hanging more heavily upon her husband's arm.

When they had passed a few yards, her husband

turning to look at the retreating forms of the party they had just passed, muttered, "I wonder who the deuce the old gentleman has got there. He is not surely married again?" Belle, who on earth could that be with my uncle?"

"Your uncle!" said Belle, turning pale. Is that your Uncle George? Really I did not know him. You know I never saw him but two or three times. I wonder he doesn't come to our house. These were common-looking people with whom he was walking," she added, with a very slight toss of the head. "Why don't you ask him to our house? I thought you were a great favourite of his."

"Oh, he wouldn't come, I know, on any formal invitation. He goes and comes when he chooses, and I should not be surprised some night if he were to drop in just from curiosity. He affects a great horror of fashion and style, and our way of living would not suit him."

"He is very wealthy, is he not?"

"Very, indeed. I wish I had some of his money just now," he added, with a sigh.

"Who was that gentleman, Mr. Arnold?" queried Mrs. Scott, for it was herself with her husband and children who were Mr. Arnold's companions. "He bowed to you, I saw, and looked as if he knew me, or wanted to know me."

"That was my extravagant nephew."

"Your nephew!" exclaimed Mrs. Scott, with a start so marked, and with such an air of astonishment, Mr. Arnold could not fail to notice it.

"Why, Susan, is there anything wonderful in my having a nephew?"

"I never heard you mention him, sir," she said, mildly.

"Umph—perhaps I had my reasons. But why do you ask?"

"That was his wife, I know, though I did not know before she was married to your nephew."

"Do you know her?"

"I did, sir. I have some cause to remember her."

"Really, it is my turn to be astonished," said Mr. Arnold, laughing; and, dropping the hands of the children, he left them to go with their father, while he walked on with Mrs. Scott. "Where did you know her, and why is it she does not choose to know you? for I saw she did not bow to you."

"Mr. Arnold," said Mrs. Scott, "she is my half-sister."

"Good Heaven, Susan, are you in earnest? My nephew's wife your half-sister! Why, I shall have to go and see her, and learn to love her for your sake."

"My name would be a very poor passport to her favour, sir, I am afraid," said Susan, sorrowfully.

"What do you mean, Susan? Have you quarrelled? Come, tell me truly—there is something at the bottom of this—out with it. I have a right to know."

"You have a right to know everything concerning me, sir, of course. You know my mother was married twice?"

"This is not the first time I have heard that—you told me that before."

"Her second husband, whom she married when I was about eighteen, had this daughter, Belle Hardinge, and after my mother's death, which took place year after her marriage, I was entirely discarded by father and daughter, and forced to shift for myself."

Belle married very soon after her father's death. She was living at the time with her aunt, who kept a boarding-house, and Mr. Arnold was one of the boarders. Since that time I have been sorely tried and have suffered much, but—" And she hesitated.

"Did you ever apply to Belle, as you call her, for assistance?"

"I did, Mr. Arnold, and—"

"Well, what did she do? Out with it," he said, impatiently. "Never mind if her husband is my nephew—tell me the whole truth. Don't leave out one word. Remember I have a claim on you greater than she or he could have on me. Why did you not tell me of this before?"

Thus appealed to, Susan narrated briefly an interview she had with Belle soon after they had moved into their new house.

It occurred shortly before she had met Mr. Benson, when she was in the very lowest depth of her misery, poverty and wretchedness.

She followed Belle to her home, had seen her enter, and, feeling that she had the common claim, which too few are willing to recognise, that of suffering humanity, had ventured to ring the bell and ask an interview.

Belle had spurned her—had mocked her misery, had taunted her with her degradation, and had refused the slightest aid, even when appealed to for the sake of her suffering, starving children.

"The vixen!" exclaimed Mr. Arnold, as Susan concluded her narrative. "Never mind—thank heaven you don't look to her for aid now. Your husband has a strong arm, and a willing heart."

"Yes, heaven bless him. No woman could have a better husband, now he is himself. He will never

see me suffer again, if he can help it, I am quite sure."

"And I don't think George Arnold would suffer your mother's daughter to suffer while he has anything to share with her. So make yourself easy," said Mr. Arnold wiped the dust from his eyes which had gathered there in such quantities, as nearly to blind him with tears.

The conversation was continued in this strain until they reached their house, when Mr. Arnold took his leave, and returned to what he now called and felt was his home.

"Robert," said his wife, on reaching home after the interview which has just been narrated, though that is scarcely the proper term, for it was only a casual meeting in the street; "did you know those persons with whom your uncle was walking?"

"No, I never saw either of them before. I thought at first it might be the man who repaired the house, but it was not him, I am sure."

"I know the woman well enough."

"You know the woman, Belle—are you crazy?"

"No, I wish I had never seen her, and least of all now that I have seen her with your uncle. Do you expect anything from your uncle?"

"I have some right to do so, unless he takes it into his head to will his property to some mission. He has no relations on earth but myself."

"I am sorry for that."

"Thank you, Belle," said Robert, rather frantically.

"There; you need not quarrel with me. I mean what I said. I am sorry I ever saw that woman. She is my step-sister."

"Why, Belle Arnold, your step-sister! Are you crazy, or are you feeling me?"

"You will find out that I am neither fooling you, as you call it, nor crazy. Now you must do as I bid you if you want to save yourself from trouble."

"Well, that is cool. I should like to know how I am to get in trouble on account of a woman I never heard of in my life till now!"

"Simply in this way," replied Belle. "When we first came here, that woman came begging to me. She told me a pitiable story, which I dare say was half made up. At any rate, whether it was true or not, I did not feel as if I could give away anything then. You were under heavy expenses, you know, in purchasing and furnishing the house, and I sent her off. It is true she had no claims on me simply because my foolish father married her mother, but now that she has seen me again, she will, of course inquire who you were, as you bowed to your uncle, and that will bring out the whole story."

"I don't see even now what I have to do with it!"

"This much: It was your wife who refused to assist her when she said she needed it, and your uncle may think that you know of her visit, and my refusal to aid her. Now, it is plain they must be very good friends, or he would not be walking with her and her children, and he may feel inclined to visit my sins on your shoulders—not that I think I was at all called upon to relieve her; but no doubt she will make up an artful story, and try to injure me and yourself in your uncle's estimation."

"But what on earth can I do?"

"You must go to your uncle, and say I sent you to ask who that lady was with whom he was walking, as I thought it must be my step-sister, whom I have not seen for some years, and for whom I have been looking very anxiously."

"Do you suppose he will believe me or you either?"

"Perhaps he will not, but it is worth the trial. You may rely upon it, she will do you some harm unless you follow my advice. Ask of him where she lives, and say how glad I shall be to see her again."

"But how on earth did it happen that I never heard of this step-sister before?"

"Oh! that's a long story. We parted long before I ever saw you; but never mind that now. Will you do as I ask you?"

"I don't see how any good can come of it, but I will see him, to satisfy you."

"It can't make things worse, and may make them much better. I wish I could see him, I could settle it very quickly."

It was, therefore, determined that Robert should see his uncle the next day, and make the affectionate inquiries dictated by his wife, after her step-sister. The result of that interview may be very briefly stated.

"My compliments to your wife, and say that I have no doubt her step-sister will be very much pleased to know of the interest which Mrs. Arnold takes in her, but she has no desire to renew the intercourse so long broken off. You may tell her," Mr. Arnold added, "that her step-sister has found a friend who will never suffer her to want."

"There, what do you think of that, Mrs. Arnold?" said her husband, dashing his clenched hand on the table, as he narrated the particulars of the inter-

view which was closed by the message just delivered.

"It is no worse than it was, Robert. I am sorry things have turned up so badly. I suppose that friend is your uncle."

"Of course, and there is so much gone from me. Well, there is no use crying over split milk," and he whistled carelessly, though his heart was ill at ease.

As for Mrs. Arnold, she could have bitten her fingers off if this would have mended matters—but as they were very pretty, tapering fingers, and the loss of them would not restore things to their former position, she determined to save her fingers and trust to luck for the future.

"I might as well tell you now, Belle, as ever," said Robert, who had been pacing the parlour, biting his lips, and drawing down his brows, "this will only hurry matters with me. I am going to Uncle George to see if I could not get him to help me little more, but that is out of the question now. I don't believe he could lend me ten pounds to save me from ruin."

"But what help me you want now? Are you not doing a good business?"

"Yes, I am doing a smashing business," he said, pausing before her, and looking her full in the eye.

"I don't understand you, Robert."

"Well, do you understand this?" he said, with something of ferocity in his tone, "if I don't get help somewhere, I shall fall before January."

"Oh yes, you told me that before. You wanted me to give up the house and all my comforts, but you did not say a word about your wife and children, and card parties, and club dinners. Oh yes, it was very well to say 'it's on me,' and her eyes began to flash, and her colour to rise, pronouncing a coming storm."

"Well, well, there's no use quarrelling about it. We have lived like fools, but it can't last much longer. All I have to tell you, Belle, is to make her while the sun shines; nothing you nor I know how soon the storm may break over us. I tell you I can't hold out much longer," and he gazed around upon his luxurious apartments, as if mentally bidding them farewell.

CHAPTER XXIV.

On the evening in which the occurrences transpired as detailed in the chapter preceding the last, Mr. and Mrs. Arnold were seated in the parlour, evidently awaiting the arrival of some person, for the lady, who was in full dress, cast frequent glances at the clock and muttered exclamations of impatience at the excessive fashion of somebody.

Robert Arnold had thrown himself full length upon a sofa, and varied the tedium of the hour by very expressive yawns.

"I do think they might come in decent season," said his wife, with an ill-concealed air of vexation; "when I wrote specially that it was only for a few friends."

"Never mind, Belle; you are just as bad as the rest of them. I never knew you to be ready before ten o'clock, and it's just eight now."

"That's all very well when one is going to a full-dressed party. Nobody thinks of going before ten or eleven o'clock; but we are only to have a few friends—a nice little sociable I wanted, and now they must turn it into a regular party."

"Well, that's the way of the world. Some of your friends, no doubt, think they would lose caste if they were to be at a party before ten or eleven o'clock, and others are so decidedly fashionable they don't come until the next day."

Mrs. Arnold's reply was cut short by a ring at the door-bell, and a smile was instantly coaxed to her face. That was the prelude to other arrivals, and for the rest of the evening her mind would be fully engrossed.

"I wonder who that is," she said, half aloud. "I am glad there is one sensible person among them."

She was not left long in wonder, for the parlour door opened, and an elderly gentleman, hat in hand and leaning on a walking-stick, was ushered in.

It was Uncle George.

"I am so glad to see you, Uncle George," said Robert, as his uncle entered the room, and he closed the door. "Let me take your hat. We are going to have a few quiet friends here to-night, and I know you will enjoy it."

"We are proud and happy to see you, Mr. Arnold," said his wife, with a sweeping courtesy, and approaching with a face wreathed in smiles, looked up into his face, but instantly checked herself as she noticed the stern and sorrowful look upon his countenance.

"And how is dear Susan?" she continued, with an air of anxious inquiry. "I do so long to see her, it is so long since we have met—though, I suppose,

the fault is my own. I daresay she has quite forgotten me."

"I dare say," replied Mr. Arnold, without moving a muscle of his face. "She is very well, and well cared for. No, I don't care to sit down; I called around for a moment on business with you," and he turned to Mr. Arnold.

"With me—certainly," replied Robert, hurriedly. "Walk up into the library. But I hope, now you are here, you will spend the evening with us. I assure you we are only to have a few intimate friends."

"Not this evening, perhaps. I may some other time."

Robert, with a sensation of uneasiness which he could not well conceal, led the way to his library (though he had never passed an hour in it since he occupied the house, except to smoke and drink), followed by his uncle.

As soon as the door was closed upon them, Mr. Arnold, laying his hat upon the table, drew from his vest pocket a small piece of paper, and turning to Robert, at the same time holding it out for his examination, asked with an air of sternness, strangely contrasted with sorrow:

"How many of these have you put out, sir?"

A glance at the paper caused to show the miserable mast that his wife had discovered, and, for a few moments, a most grim object could scarcely be found.

His face assumed an ashen pallor. His lips were half-opened, but they failed to utter a sound, and the cold sweat started at every pore.

Terror—shame—remorse and guilt, were plainly depicted on his features, and he stood there before his relative a distorted felon.

"I ask you, sir, how many like this have you put out?" and he shook the paper at the trembling culprit.

"Oh, nudge!" exclaimed Robert, at length finding voice, and stretching out his clasped hands in supplication.

"Drop that word, sir. I am George Arnold simply. Come, sir, answer my question."

"I cannot say without referring to my books. Oh, sir, for Heaven's sake hear me, and do not—"

"You need not make any appeals, sir," said Mr. Arnold, sternly, interrupting his nephew, none are necessary. Tell me at once how many of these notes are out. This is not the only one, I know."

"I cannot say, sir," said, or rather whispered Robert, sinking into a chair, the picture of despair.

"You can tell me within some thousand. A correct, active, business man like Robert Arnold, doing such a flourishing business, he said, ironically, "ought surely to be able—"

"Oh, sir, spare me; do not mind," said Robert, imploredly.

"I have said once I will not be called your uncle. Answer my question instantly, and as truly as you can speak, or the consequences may be more serious than you dream of. I want—I must have an immediate answer. Take your time to think and answer me!"

Mr. Arnold seated himself leisurely, confronting his guilty—conscience-stricken nephew.

A pause of a few moments ensued. So deep—so still—so solemn, the beating of either heart could have been heard in the breeze.

It was broken by Robert, who, without raising his eyes, said in a low, hoarse voice:

"There is a little over two thousand pounds!"

"Two thousand pounds? In addition to this one?" and he held out the bill which he still held in his hand. Robert shook his head.

"To whom did you give them? I don't ask what you have done with the money. This folly and frippery answers that question," and he looked about the luxuriously furnished room with an air of supreme contempt.

At that moment the sound of music from below reached the ears of uncle and nephew—the musicians engaged for the evening were tuning their instruments. On the ears of Robert it grated with a force, a harshness which penetrated to his very brain. On the mind the impression was different. His lips curled with scorn, and his face assumed an aspect of sternness actually terrible.

"And it was for such follies as these," and he pointed below whence the sound proceeded, "you have sacrificed yourself. I wonder, sir, what your friends would say if they knew what was passing in this room. But no matter. This is your business, not mine. Now, sir, I ask you again to whom did you part with these bills?"

"Mr. Gripe, sir, my broker, got them all discounted."

"Mr. Gripe—oh yes—I don't wonder so much at anything now, if you fell into his hands."

"Oh, sir, believe me, I have—"

"Robert Arnold—I will not listen to one word of extenuation. I cannot believe one word you have said. Now hearken to me. I do not intend to send you to prison. Not for your own sake, sir, but for mine. The world knows that you are my only brother's child, and I thank heaven that he has been spared the agony of knowing how deep his son has sunk in infamy. I would not have his memory reviled and trampled on for your sake. Find out where those bills are. Send them to me, and I will take them up. But one condition is—"

"Name it. Anything on earth which I can do to show my deep penitence!"

"Pshaw! don't talk to me of your penitence. Your penitence, sir, is simply the joy you feel, because I have said that you will not be sent to prison as you have deserved. Your penitence is only another name for shame that your guilt has been discovered and exposed. The condition I exact is that you instantly abandon the infamous manner in which you are living, for it is nothing but swindling, lying and cheating for you to be living in this style on other people's money. Your life, sir; is a living lie. You are a proper mark for the finger of scorn from every honourable and honest man."

"I will do it, sir."

"You, with life opening so brightly—with prospects which might encourage to the holiest efforts, and stimulate every energy of manhood. Oh, for shame—for shame."

"And you must wind up your business at once. No man must suffer more from your villainy."

"I will make an assignment at once, sir; and see you," said Robert, fairly shaking with excitement.

"Secure me!" sneered his uncle. "Do you think I would receive one shilling of money earned by fraud? I will take care of myself. Procure those bills immediately, and send them to me. Mind, sir; send them, I do not wish to see you. I never will again if it can be avoided. From me you are safe, and I wish you as easy an escape from others. Good night, sir, and remember—"

"Oh, Uncle George—"

But Mr. Arnold heeded not his words, and seizing his hat, left the room deliberately, without turning to give one look at the guilty young man, who stood there spell-bound, and suffering an agony of spirit which almost merited pity.

Robert watched the retreating form of his uncle until he disappeared at the curve of the stairs, then slowly turning away, he sank into his large arm-chair, completely overpowered by the terrific excitement through which he had just passed.

How truly had the words he uttered to his wife a few days before, come to pass. The storm had in truth burst upon him, and with tenfold more fury than even he had expected. He had looked with certainty for the time when his bills would be protested, and his credit ruined.

When his warehouse must be closed by his creditors, when his house must be sold over his head, and his career of prosperity (for he called his course of wilful, reckless extravagance, supported by fraud and crime, prosperity), cut short. But he had not looked for this.

He had expected that Gripe and his friend would have kept their word—that these bills, such undeniable evidences of his folly and his guilt, would have been buried from sight, and that he would have been enabled to save himself from detection, and the just punishment which his conscience told him was due to his crimes.

But the blow had come suddenly, unEXPECTEDLY, and from an unlooked-for source, it crushed him to the very earth. And with this detection came the certainty that every hope was blasted. He might reasonably have expected to survive his uncle, and as he had no living relative but himself, to become a participant at last in the large fortune which he had spent a lifetime in amassing. But the discovery of the relationship between Mrs. Scott and his wife, added to her conduct towards her, followed by this detection of actual crime on his part, was the death-blow to the hopes he had cherished.

And now he must give up. He could no longer continue business. He could no longer occupy this house with its luxuries and comforts. His tastes had been so long pampered that even with the recollection of the narrow escape he had just made from public disgrace and punishment, he could not forego them without a regret. His nature had grown purely sensual, and his tastes artificial. His habits of extravagance were as much confirmed in him, as that of drinking in the old toper.

The idea of giving up his old mode of living was something he deemed impossible. The thoughts of sacrificing the position he had attained in what he called society, was harrowing, and yet there was no alternative.

Utter and absolute ruin stared him in the face.

He could not pay two shillings of his honest debts, while he had for the greater part of the past year been living a life of wanton extravagance and foolish dissipation, on money borrowed not only on forged bills, but borrowed at rates which could only lead him to certain—irretrievable ruin.

And he had reached that point. Edin stared him in the face. Character, standing and reputation were utterly blasted, for who would trust him hereafter, when an examination of his books would show that he had been paying from twenty-fives to one hundred and fifty per cent. for money with which to support his extravagance? for even he could not deny, that had he been governed in his expensess at home and in his business by judicious prudence and economy, he could have obtained a substantial and permanent footing in the business world, and secured in a few years an honourable independence.

The train of his thoughts, which had continued, he knew not how long, was broken by the entrance of his wife, who, not having observed his uncle's departure, stole away from her company, which had assembled in considerable numbers, in the hope of inducing him to remain.

Two or three knocks at the door being unnoticed, Robert was so engrossed in his thoughts that he had not heard her, she pushed it gently open and discovered her husband alone.

He was seated in a large, cushioned arm-chair, his chin buried in his breast, and so lost in thought he had not even heard her entrance.

"Come, Robert," she said, laying her hand gently on his shoulder, "your friends are—"

But she did not, for she could not, finish the sentence. Her husband raised his head slowly, but without moving his posture in the chair, and his face was so ghastly—so haggard—so expressive of anguish, she started back in affright.

"Good Heavens! Robert, what is the matter? Are you ill?"

He made her no reply, but pushed her back gently with his hand, as she approached to lean over him.

"What is the matter?" she repeated. "What has happened? You look perfectly wild. I would not have your friends see you now for the world."

At the word friends, Robert shuddered and looked her with meanings, vacillating, relieved only by a smile which could hardly be interpreted.

"There, I feel better," he said, suddenly springing up, "we had some hard, unpleasant words, and you know I don't like that. I shall feel quite well directly. I had no business to suffer myself to get so excited. There, go downstairs; I will be there directly. Leave me alone a few moments till I can get over it."

And Belle, ever anxious to escape from everything unpleasant, gladly obeyed his direction, and returned to her gay friends, who had not missed her; but who had often inquired for Mr. Arnold, as he was the life and soul of every company.

Robert went into a side room adjoining the library, and cooled his head with a hearty wash in the cold Croton; then, ringing the bell, he ordered the servant to bring him quietly some brandy.

Pouring out a double portion, he drank it off at a draught, saying, as he placed the tumbler on the table:

"Well, I will go out in a blaze of glory, anyhow."

And in a few minutes he had mingled with the company, where he never appeared so gay, almost as was observed, recklessly so, and never had he been more entertaining.

He talked the loudest, laughed the most heartily, and drank the deepest of any one in the house. In fact, he was in an unnatural state of excitement, which, growing with the food it fed on, would have destroyed his senses had it continued much longer.

The party broke up about half-past one, and when the door closed upon the last guest, Robert drew his wife into the parlor, and carefully closing all the doors, said:

"Well, we did have an elegant time, did we not?"

"Oh! magnificent," said his wife, "and how well-dressed they all were, and everybody seemed to enjoy themselves so much."

"Sit down," he said, seizing her arm with a violence of which he was unconscious, but which caused her to look at him with astonishment, and something of anger.

Striding away, he approached a richly-carved sideboard, on which were scattered bottles, decanters, and glasses in confusion, and pouring out half a goblet of brandy, he tossed it off at a draught. So highly, however, was his nervous system excited by the occurrences which transpired in the early part of the night, it had no perceptible effect upon him.

Returning to the sofa on which his wife had remained seated, and half lost in wonder, he said:

"Belle, I told you the other day to make hay while the sun shone."

"You did, but I really did not understand you, Robert."

"I told you a storm was coming," he said, with vehemence, "I tell you now it has come," and his words were uttered with a scream, so intensely was he excited.

"I don't know what you mean even now," said his wife, trembling with apprehension, for his air and manner had really alarmed her.

"Mean—why, it's as plain as the handwriting on the wall. I am ruined—a beggar. You don't look much like a beggar's wife, do you?" and he took hold of her costly dress, and pointed to the massive and expensive jewellery which adorned her person. "This don't look much like a beggar's house, does it?" he continued, raising his voice to its utmost pitch.

And he gazed around upon the luxurious furniture which surrounded him.

"Robert, what do you mean?" exclaimed his wife; "you cannot be in earnest?"

"Then English language cannot make you understand. I tell you again that I am utterly and hopelessly ruined. In a week you will be in furnished rooms at two pounds a week, if I can find any one to take us in," he added, in a subdued tone. "Yes, Belle, it's all over now. The storm has burst with more terrible fury than even I dared to think of, and I am completely wrecked. So make up your mind for the worst, for the worst has come."

Mrs. Arnold now comprehended his full meaning. He had warned her, but she had not heeded his warning, for she had been incapable of reflection. But there was no mistaking his present words. Ruin had overtaken them, and like the Babylonian monarch, even in the midst of merriment and feasting, the handwriting had appeared upon the wall.

She was shocked—stunned—stupefied, and could say nothing coherently, but throwing herself back upon the sofa, gave vent to her feelings in tears and sobs.

"Robert," she said, when she found voice to speak, "let me go to your uncle. I am sure he has something to do with this sudden change. He may, perhaps—"

"Yes, perhaps he may. I will tell you what he will do; he will remind you that you turned your step-sister from your doors when she was starving, and he will tell you that you had better go to her, to try if her heart may not be warmer and softer than your own. And as for me, he might tell you—but no matter. Don't waste your time with him. Make up your mind to leave this house at once. In a few days, the house and everything in it will be seized."

"Why, surely, Robert, they won't take the house from you. You don't owe so much as that!"

"Belle, if I owned five such houses, and did not owe a penny on them, I could not more than pay my debts. This house and all it holds would not pay one-twentieth part of my debts. Do as I bid you. To-morrow begin to make all your preparations to leave, and don't wait to be turned out, for as sure as the sun rises, you will not be suffered to remain here one week after the true state of my affairs is known."

It is unnecessary to pursue in detail the conversation of the evening.

It was crimination on one part, and recrimination on the other; for before they parted, both had lost a large portion of their temper.

It was closed, however, by Robert, who, seeing that there would or could be no end, urged his wife to retire, as he had much to think of before he dared to close his eyes.

She flounced out of the room with some muttered remarks which he did not hear, but it satisfied her, for she had her woman's privilege, the last word.

When she had retired, Robert paced the room for some minutes in deep thought. Then seating himself at a centre table, he drew towards him a large pictorial publication which lay there, and with his pencil, commenced making some calculations on the blank leaves.

This engrossed his attention for some time, and at the close, laying down his pencil, he said to himself, though he spoke sotto voce:

"Well, it ain't so bad after all. If he takes up those bills, that is two thousand pounds off my shoulders, and Gripe must give up those country bills. I can raise more on them for the present, and

that will carry me on through December. I declare I was more frightened than hurt."

And Robert Arnold, who certainly could not have been in possession of his full senses, was so lost to all sense of honour, as to forget the great—the inappreciable kindness which he had received at his uncle's hands, and had already begun to calculate what benefit he should or might derive from it.

He saw that, relieved of this load of upwards of two thousand pounds, and careless of the loan upon insurance stock, amounting to nearly one thousand pounds more (for he had not forgotten Mr. Gripe's warning on that point), he might feel easy for some time—at least until January, and he actually determined to brazen it out.

He well knew the dangers and difficulties of his position as regarded his uncle, but having now nothing more to hope from him, his thoughts were bent on other things.

True, he had told his wife that he was ruined—that she must leave her present home and comforts immediately—that she must be prepared to be called a beggar's wife, but then his fears had carried him away; he had magnified the danger in which he stood, and he could easily soothe her.

He spent the night, or what was left of it, in the parlour, between his figures and his thoughts, and when the servant came in at an early hour in the morning, she found him asleep upon the sofa.

Ordering an early breakfast, his first thought was to arouse his wife, and calm her fears; but not wishing to disturb her, he concluded to leave that duty until he returned from his place of business.

(To be Continued.)

COURTING.

THE thoughts of the young naturally revert, more or less, to love, courtship, and matrimony. By the unsophisticated it is thought that love leads to courtship, and courtship to matrimony. It is to be feared, however, that if there are no marriages which have not been preceded by courtship, there are many courtships which have not been led up to by love.

No doubt the majority of marriages are brought about by affection of a certain sort; indeed, it would be ridiculous to suppose that persons willingly tie themselves (or life to others for whom they have but little regard). The man who married a woman whom he disliked, and the woman who united herself with a man whom she regarded with aversion, would very probably be held to be bereft of their senses, notwithstanding that they benefited themselves in a social point of view.

But if most people do not positively dislike those whom they marry, many are strangers to the grand passion about which poets have sung and some novelists have well-nigh gone crazy. Liking is not loving, and while a vast number of those who marry really like each other, there is reason to believe that but a comparatively few actually love. They may all persuade themselves that they do the latter thing, and may remain the victims of their delusions until after their unions have been consummated. But they are compelled to abandon their fool's paradise sooner or later, and the misfortune is that they often only find out the true state of their hearts when it is too late for them to do anything but bear with becoming meekness the yoke which they have imposed upon themselves.

Nothing is easier than for a man to persuade himself that he is in love when he is nothing of the kind. Once out of twice when a man so persuades himself, he is in love with a creation of his own fancy and not with the woman whom he thinks has captivated him. Every man has his ideal woman, and it is not difficult for a man who has an impressionable and romantic nature when he meets a woman who is pleasant to his senses to imagine that she possesses all the admirable qualities of his ideal. In too many cases he is bound to be undeceived sooner or later, but the course of undecision is a gradual and often lengthy one. Indeed, it frequently runs on longer than his wooing and courting. This, perhaps, is not surprising, seeing that but small opportunity is given to him until after the nuptial knot has been firmly tied, of proving whether or not he has made a mistake. Neither public opinion nor the law allows that he has any right to make a mistake. This is continually being demonstrated. If a man engages to marry a woman, and then, discovering that he has misread his own heart and formed a wrong estimate of her character, deserts her in preference to running the risk of making her and himself miserable for life, he is branded as a cold-blooded scoundrel, and the chances are that an action for

breach of promise of marriage is brought against him, with the result that he has to pay heavy damages and a formidable bill of costs. It is seldom, however, that he positively runs away from his word, for an ordinary courtship is not likely to correct any of the errors into which he may have fallen.

Follow the course of an ordinary young man's wooing and courting, and one cannot be blind to the great extent to which he is dependent upon chance for happiness or misery. He meets his sweetheart, perhaps, in the first instance, at a picnic, at a ball, or at some other popular rendezvous, and is attracted by the brightness of her eyes, the merriness of her laugh, the gleam of her teeth, the ripple of her hair, the tones of her voice, or the flutter of her dress. Therupon he sets to work to idealise her generally, and does so with such success that he imagines that the conquest of her heart will be a magnificent and soul-elevating triumph. He puts on his best behaviour, and so the probability is that she is led to make the same mistake in reference to him that he makes in regard to her. She meets him half-way. Amiable to the last degree, she bewitches him still further by her smiles and gay sallies; and he may be excused if he thinks that she is so near perfection that it is impossible for her to display irritation or ill-feeling except at the expense of those whom he shows a disposition to regard as rivals, which little indication of the presence of evil in her composition pleases him rather than not.

By-and-by he asks her to be his wife, and experiences a quiver of delight when she shyly answers yes, and he presses a kiss upon her lips. From time to time that event takes place until the day upon which he meets her at the altar, the pair spend a large portion of their time in paying homage to each other, and flattery being extremely pleasant, this is very gratifying to both. They are not permitted to meet at a disadvantage. She never appears before him in deshabille. When he visits her at the parental home she receives him in a neat costume, and with a face of smiles, and with sweet words; notwithstanding that she may just have been having an angry altercation with her sister, who is not "engaged," and is inclined to be jealous of those who are. Then, though he may be a sloven and a bad-tempered being in a general way, when he goes forth to pay his court to her he does so looking his best and determined to appear amiable, however unattractive he may feel. The pair see each other under the circumstances indicated once or twice a week and are shortly supposed to know and thoroughly understand each other! They marry, and then comes the honeymoon. This is supposed to be the most delicious period of their life, but alas! it is pregnant with awful revelations to many unfortunate men and women.

In the few weeks which succeed marriage often a great deal more is learned than is admitted by the recipients of the lessons. But the effect of the lessons is tremendous and permanent. The man and woman find that they have been mistaken in each other. They have been the victims of imposture—unconscious imposture, perhaps, but impostures all the same; and as the miserable truth dawns upon them they feel very bitter. It may be discovered that their natures are of a kind which utterly decline to harmonise. It would be painful to sketch the career of such a couple. They feel their mistake as much as any one does, especially as it is a mistake which they cannot own. Perhaps they see that it might have been avoided, and perhaps they are led to condemn the laws of society, under which people who know nothing of each other, and are not allowed to know anything of each other, are daily married by the score. Whatever they do, however, matters will probably remain as they are. Those who draw back before it is too late, and are, in consequence, branded as scoundrels and otherwise punished, may derive some comfort they can from contemplating the wreckage with which the matrimonial sea is covered.

THE DIAMOND BRACELET.

CHAPTER VIII.

"HAVE you heard of Topes?" asked Elliot.
"Yes, master. I questioned some of the men who came to our camp, and found that three of them had been soldiers in the Sepoy regiments in the time of trouble. They had all been stationed at Shahjehanpoor. One of them had never heard of Topes. The second had known him well, and said that he had perished in the revolt—that he had been shot down by an English soldier."

"Ah!" breathed Elliot, in a tone of keenest disappointment.

"The third," said the Parsee, "declared that Topes had been wounded, but that he had not been killed. He said that Topes had appeared here at Lassa two years after the war, and stayed over night on his way southward."

"If he were living then, he is likely to be living still. He went to the southward, you say?"

"Yes, master, but he afterwards was seen by a friend of the man who told me, on his way to the northward. His relatives live in the Punjab, in a little town called Nares. I can conduct you straight to the place. It is many days hence."

"We will go to Nares. If his relations are there, he is likely to be near them. Or, if not, Miss Elliot may be with his relations, or we may get some clue to his whereabouts. You have made a great discovery, Kalloo!"

"Puntab discovered nothing," said the Parsee, full of contempt for his enemy. "Kalloo has eyes and ears. He is silent as the snake. He hears all things. There's another discovery for you, master."

"What is it?"

"Puntab and his comrades are the servants of the great Calcutta merchant. They are also spies upon you. They watch all your movements to report them to their master. They listen when you speak; they creep in and out of your tent. They are your enemies!"

Elliot was startled at this revelation, but a few minutes' reflection caused him to wonder why he had not suspected the fact before.

"The Calcutta merchant is also your enemy," continued Kalloo. "Perhaps he does not wish you to find the young lady. Perhaps he would like to capture her and claim the reward himself."

"Impossible! He is rich. The men may mean treachery on their own account."

"Not so. I have long suspected that something was wrong. This morning I listened under their tent before daybreak, and I heard Puntab say that the master had hired them to spy upon you and upon his son, and that if you discovered the young lady—they—Puntab and his friends—were to steal her from you and convey her to their master!"

Elliot was shocked, but he did not doubt the truth of this revelation.

"I will insist upon the discharge of these men tomorrow," he exclaimed, "or I will separate from Bathurst!"

"Not so, master. I only told you to put you on your guard. If you separate from them, they will follow you. Do not convert them into open enemies. Know them in your heart, but keep your knowledge to yourself. Be on your watch and on your guard, but leave the case to me. I will bring you out all right."

It was obviously good advice. Looking into the subtle bronze face of his ally, Elliot knew that Kalloo could manage matters better than he could do, and he consented to keep silent and continue the journey without allowing his enemies to suspect that he had found them out.

"But my task becomes doubly hard," he thought. "Foes on every side. Mr. Bathurst a secret enemy, and determined to outwit us; the wily Topes to discover; the girl's fate probably too horrible to contemplate. I feel as if I were pushing forward into awful perils, and for what? Let what will happen, I will press forward to the end. But what is to be that end?"

Elliot and Bathurst, with their little train, pushed on towards the distant town of Nares with all convenient speed, journeying only at morning and evening, and resting during the long, sweltering, midday heats in palm groves beside cool streams of running water.

They saw many strange people, they passed through many villages, they made frequent inquiries, but they heard nothing that could throw light upon the object of their search.

Some ten days after leaving the little village of Lassa they approached Nares. It was a little town, with a Mohammedan mosque, a Hindoo temple, and with a collection of houses varying from squalor to luxury.

They entered the narrow streets, and found a khan, or inn, where they obtained lodgings.

English visitors were rare at Nares, and they excited a great deal of attention, so much so that all their movements were followed by curious people as well as by the miserable parish-dogs that infested the place.

Puntab and Kalloo pursued their investigations in the town, working separately, each desirous of finding the clue to the whereabouts of the Sepoy Topes. But that clue was not to be readily found.

The relatives of Topes were discovered with con-

siderable difficulty, and proved to be very cunning Hindoos of the lower class.

They were interrogated by the Parsee and Hindoo in turn, but they proved exceedingly uncommunicative.

At first they declared that Topee had been killed by a British soldier during the war, but upon being assured that Topee had been seen at Lassa two years after the rebellion by a former comrade, with whom he had lodged, they stated that their kinsman had indeed survived the revolt, but had since died during a visit to the sacred city of Benares.

Neither Kalloo nor Puntab believed a word of this story. They knew their informants were lying. They tried bribes and persuasions to no effect. The kinsmen of Topee were insensible to all their appeals. And the two men returned with their ill-report to their employers, quite convinced that Topee was still alive.

It seemed possible that the former Sepoy was a resident of Nares, and Kalloo and Puntab searched for him in every quarter of the town, frequently returning to Topee's kinsmen and renewing their bribes and inquiries in that quarter, with the same ill-success as before.

Kalloo pursued his investigations with remarkable fineness and shrewdness. He inquired at the bazaars and elsewhere if a white girl had ever been seen in the town, and was answered in the negative. In spite of all his cunning, he was balked in his pursuit, and was compelled to acknowledge himself at a loss what to do next.

The party remained at Nares for a fortnight, and then, greatly discouraged, made up their minds to push on. They had no longer any definite plan, but they had no idea of returning to Calcutta, or giving up their search.

Kalloo proposed that as they were now in the native province of Topee, they should search each village and hamlet by turn, in the hope of discovering him.

"He would be likely to return to his own province to settle," said the Parsee, shrewdly. "He may not be a day's journey from us at this moment!"

The proposition met with favour. The little train moved from town to town and from village to village throughout the province. Days and weeks were thus consumed. March heats increased to April fervor, and still no glimmer of success appeared to encourage them.

Bathurst began to grow discouraged. Puntab openly urged a return to Calcutta, alleging that all their efforts were useless, and that the girl had died years ago. But Elliot and his Parsee attendant, the former inspired still by his tender pity for the bereaved and suffering Earl of Tregaron, and by a holy enthusiasm in the cause he had undertaken, and the latter feverishly eager to gain the reward that had been promised him, never swerved from their great purpose; and Bathurst, fearing that they might possibly after all succeed, would not turn back and so risk the prize that success might bring to him.

But the towns and villages had nearly all been visited, and still nothing had been heard of any English girl in all the province, and still no trace was found of the revengeful Sepoy who had stolen her.

They encamped one evening early in May beside one of the frequent streams of water under a banyan tree, amid whose innumerable trunks and under whose broad canopy of verdure there was room for a small army.

Horses and men were gathered in the cool shade. The day had been very hot, and they had spent its sultriest hours in the edge of a jungle, resuming their journey at sunset. A march of two hours had brought them to this spot, where they resolved to encamp for the night.

Bathurst flung off his broad-brimmed hat, with its encircling folds of linen and neck-cape, and stretched himself on the greenward. Elliot paced to and fro among the grand arches up and down the natural aisle formed by the trunks of the mighty trees, and gave himself up to thought. Kalloo sat apart, and regarded Elliot and Bathurst alternately, the former with a gaze of genuine devotion, the latter with slow and vindictive hatred, as if he were meditating upon schemes of horrible revenge. Puntab and the others stood near at hand, discontended of countenance.

"I tell you, Elliot," said Bathurst, pulling up a handful of grass and flinging it from him, "we are on a wild-goose chase, as my father prophesied. We are worn thin with our marches. The country is beastly, and you and I are lunatics to search longer for a girl who is undoubtedly dead. Let us return to Calcutta."

"It will be best so!" cried Puntab, eagerly. "The Sepoy and the girl are dead. Let us return to Calcutta."

"You can go if you wish, Bathurst," said Elliot, quietly, "but we have discussed this matter before, and you know that I will not turn back."

"If you continue the search I must stay with you," declared Bathurst, moodily: "but I am discouraged. We cannot find Topee. We cannot hear of a white woman in this part of India. Miss Elliot is certainly dead."

"We will find her or prove her dead!" said Elliot.

"Where do you go next? We have nearly finished this province. Do you intend to search India, province by province, village by village, inch by inch?"

"Possibly. If I could only hear of a white woman in upper India, outside the army stations, I should have a definite clue. Oh! for some clue—some ray of light upon this terrible mystery! I feel as if something was about to happen. Bathurst, as if light were about to beam upon our darkness."

Bathurst scoffed. He had little faith in any change for the better.

But Kalloo's eyes glistened. To him our hero was the grandest being he had ever known.

Elliot's gentle courtesy, as unfailing even in his intercourse with the Parsee or the horse-keepers in a lady's drawing-room, had won the fellow's heart.

He was quite ready to believe that the blue-eyed, olive-skinned young Englishman, with his debonair beauty, was a favourite of the gods, and was vouchsafed supernatural explanations.

So great was his faith, that he advanced to the edge of the shade of the great tree, and stared over the great plain with keen and dart-like glances.

Presently he uttered an exclamation.

"What is it?" demanded Punjab.

"The master said he felt as if something was about to happen," said Kalloo, excitedly. "He feels as if light were about to beam on us! Look yonder. A man is coming. He brings with him the clue the master seeks."

Bathurst laughed loudly.

"Your Parsee believes you implicitly, you see, Elliot," he exclaimed. "He seems to regard you as a sort of prophet. Let us take a look at this stranger!"

He rose up, and they all gazed in the direction in which Kalloo was looking.

The plain was bathed in a perfect flood of moonlight.

And afar off they beheld a straggling figure approaching their retreat with a staggering motion, as if utterly weary.

Bathurst and Puntab mocked the Parsee, who stood immovable, his bronze visage wearing an expression of sphinx-like calmness.

The wanderer came nearer yet and nearer. He could not see the waiting figures in the banyan's shade.

Elliot and the Parsee stood heart-together. Puntab stood a little in the rear of Bathurst, whom he regarded as his especial patron. The horsekeepers, or syces, remained in the background at a respectful distance.

The tree stood alone. Far and wide the plain stretched around it, bare in the moon's rays.

It was clear that the wanderer was about to seek the shelter of the shade that had attracted him.

Bathurst hushed his mockery as the stranger drew nearer.

He was seen to be a half-naked, wandering fakir, or native mendicant monk, and when he finally gained the shelter of the tree the travellers accosted him.

Elliot offered him food, which he accepted eagerly. He was a dirty, ragged specimen of humanity, with long hair hanging over his shoulders, tall and gaunt of frame, with high cheek-bones, and hollow eyes, a seeming incarnation of misery.

But he presently proved himself capable of sensual enjoyments, for he ate the bountiful supper offered before him, and asked for more, and reclined upon the grass at his ease afterwards in garrulous delight.

Elliot and Bathurst had during their wanderings picked up a smattering of Hindostanee, and could understand very well ordinary discourse in that tongue.

"Question him, Kalloo," said our hero, interested in this strange type of humanity, common enough, however, in India. "Ask him whence he comes."

The Parsee obeyed.

"I am like the wind," replied the fakir. "I come from the north, the south, the east, and the west. I go everywhere."

Kalloo continued his questionings, and the fakir launched forth into marvellous tales of scenes he had witnessed, and countries he had visited; of the Hill people, as the people who live among the mountains are called; of the Panjab, and the sandy desert of Sind; of waterfalls and rivers; of mosques and temples; of pious men who had tortured

themselves for the sake of religion; of finger-nails he had seen of many inches in length, and tortuously shaped, twisting and winding their way through the human hand; of men who had stood for years upon a marble pillar without moving, and of many other equally remarkable occurrences.

"I have travelled all over this mighty country," he said, proudly. "I know every province. I know the small kingdoms that have never yielded to British rule. I know this country better than any man who lives."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Elliot. "Did you ever know a man named Topee?"

"I have known many such."

"But this was a Sepoy—"

"I have known many named Topee who were Sepoys," replied the fakir, placidly.

"That's about as near as you'll ever get to the man we seek, Elliot," said Bathurst.

"Did you ever hear of any white woman in upper India?" inquired Elliot.

"Several, master," answered the fakir. "I know of some that are blind and maimed, who hide themselves far from their countrymen. They are hid in harems and huts, in lonely places!"

Elliot's heart sunk within him.

"We seek an English girl," he said, "who was stolen by a Sepoy thirteen years ago! She is twenty years of age now."

"You'll not find her," said the fakir. "They don't want to be found, those Englishwomen. Better leave her alone. She won't be what you'd wish to see. Better consider her dead. I know a fellah who has an English wife and several children. I know two or three white women slaves. But only two white women in Upper India are better off than slaves."

"But two? You know of two? Where are they? Who are they?" cried Elliot, excitedly.

"They are the White Begum and her sister," said the fakir.

"The White Begum! Who is she?"

"In a small kingdom which still is under native rule, far to the northward and eastward," said the fakir, "the White Begum rules supreme. The kingdom is Khalsar. The White Begum succeeded the late queen, who is of Hindoo birth. There is talk of war in Khalsar. The queen bequeathed her crown to the White Begum, who succeeded her, and the late queen's brother contests the matter, and intends to marry or to oust the present queen."

"How old is the White Begum? Is she English?"

"They say that she is not English, but a pale daughter of the gods," said the fakir. "She is young, of the age you have named, and she is virgin. She is tall and straight as the palm-tree, with a skin fair as the snow on the Himalayas, with soft eyes like yonder stars of heaven, and her hair is like a drift of sunshine. The late queen hated her brother, and adopted this girl as her heir to the throne."

"A glowing description, truly!" ejaculated Bathurst, his sinister face aglow. "I say, Elliot, suppose this White Begum proves to be Lord Tregaron's daughter?"

"You said she had a sister?" said Elliot, addressing the fakir.

"The White Begum calls the other sister, but the other is not a daughter of the gods. She is English, perhaps—"

"Dark?"

"No—fair!"

"Then she's Katherina Elliot!" exclaimed Bathurst. "You were right, Elliot. You've found your clue. Let us be off in the morning for Khalsar!"

Elliot's olive skin glowed also, and with a joyous excitement.

"We will go to Khalsar. We may find Miss Elliot in the White Begum, or in her so-called sister. And if we fail to find her, we will then visit these others whom the fakir has seen. Kalloo, ask the fakir to guide us to the kingdom of Khalsar, and we will pay him well."

Parsee made the proposition to the fakir, who accepted it, promising to guide them to the country of the White Begum.

The next morning the travellers resumed their march under the guidance of the fakir, greatly cheered and encouraged, and with new hopes and energy.

Day after day they pushed forward, halting in the sweltering noons. They had adventures which we will not stop to narrate. But nearly two weeks later they entered upon a fair and fertile country, with artificial ponds and cultured fields, with orange groves and vines and rice-meadows, and with all the signs of a great material prosperity. The houses were small but picturesque, with overhanging thatched roofs and wide verandas, and the people whom they met were neatly clothed in

white. There were signs of poverty in places, but there was no equal.

"We are now in the kingdom of 'Khalsar,'" announced the fakir. "To-morrow we shall arrive at the White Begum's royal city of Putpur, where she lives."

"The country looks civilised to an unusual degree," remarked Bathurst. "What is the White Begum's religion?"

"She is Christian!"

Both Elliot and Bathurst echoed the word in astonishment.

"There are Mohammedan mosques and Parsee and Hindoo temples at Putpur," explained the fakir, "but the White Begum is a Christian. The late queen was a Christian also. A Christian missionary found his way to Khalsar many years ago, and remains there still. He converted the late queen from her faith in the gods of her fathers to his own belief. The queen was tolerant to other faiths, yet won many to the Christian doctrine. The late queen's brother is a Brahmin, and desires to re-establish the ancient religion, but the people love their new queen, the White Begum, and most of them will stand by her and defend her claims to the throne."

As they advanced into the country the signs of prosperity increased. Upon the second day after entering the kingdom, in the early evening, they reached the capital.

Putpur differs in no wise from many other cities of India. It is surrounded by a high wall, and has four gates, which are guarded by houses and keepers. The travellers entered by the southern gate and passed along the narrow and dusty street, and were guided by the fakir to a khan in which they obtained lodgings.

They made themselves comfortable for the night. Kalloo and Puntab went forth in quest of news, and returned at a late hour, stating that it would not be at all difficult for the young Englishmen to obtain an audience with the White Begum.

"She sees every one, rich and poor, who may wish to see her," said Kalloo, "at an early hour of every morning. The poor go to her for help—the oppressed go to ask for justice. The rich go to pay their homage to her. She turns none away without a kind word or assistance. Her sister is always in attendance upon her."

"We will go to the White Begum's reception," said Elliot. "Heaven grant that in her, or her so-called sister, we may find Miss Elliot!"

He did not sleep that night. He thought for hours of Lord Tregaron in his princely home in England, and prayed with all his soul that he might find the earl's daughter pure and spotless, and that he might be able to return her in safety to her father.

He arose at daybreak and made his toilet. And an hour after sunrise, in the cool of the lovely morning, he set out with Bathurst, and attended by a guide, on his way to the palace.

CHAPTER IX.

We will now return to Mr. Thomas Bathurst, the wealthy Calcutta merchant, the secret enemy of his cousin, Lord Tregaron.

We have hinted at a mystery in the life of the proprietor of Banyan Villa. We have declared that he had secret schemes, and we now purpose giving a glimpse of these to the reader.

As Kalloo had discovered, Puntab and the Ayees were spies, upon Elliot and young Bathurst, in the pay of the Calcutta merchant. The elder Bathurst was anxious to discover the long hidden secret of Lord Tregaron, exactly as the Parsee had declared, and was anxious also to get Miss Elliot into his own keeping.

His object will presently become apparent.

The merchant received a letter from Puntab, dated at Shahjehanpoor, giving the result of the young man's investigation at that place.

"I could have told them that they would not find Topees there," he exclaimed, when he had read this report. "I've been all over that ground myself. I have searched that station and many other stations. I have sought Topees in all the large towns. I have looked for the girl in every squalid hut in all that region. I know she's dead."

Yet he looked eagerly for a second letter.

It came some weeks later, and was dated at Lassa. In this the Hindoo stated that the young Englishmen were about to journey to Nares in search of Topees's relatives, who, it had been discovered, resided there.

"They are on the track," cried the merchant. "With all my toil, I never found so great a clog. They will find Topees. Will they find the girl? Is she, after all, alive? If she is, Puntab and the Ayees will steal her away from Elliot and Bathurst, and bring her direct to me at the spot I appointed,

Puntab speaks in this letter of a Parsee named Kalloo, who is sharp as a sword, and may make him mischief. I defy any Parsee to get ahead of Puntab. He is the wildest rascal in India."

The merchant waited long for a third letter. It came at last, yellow and stained, having travelled by strange posts in the north, and was dated at a small town, where the young Englishmen had stopped for a few hours after leaving Nares.

In this misive Puntab recited the strange adventure of the meeting with the fakir, and rehearsed his story of the White Begum and her supposed sister.

"We are now on our way, most gracious master," concluded Puntab, "to the kingdom of Khalsar, over which the White Begum rules. Before you receive this letter we shall be in the imperial city of Putpur. If the White Begum or her sister prove to be the lady you seek, you may depend upon your most unworthy servant to steal her away secretly and bring her into your honoured presence!"

This news greatly excited the merchant.

He received the letter at his place of business in the early morning. He drove home soon after to take his bath and siesta, but his corpulent figure and puffy, yellow face were not seen on the Esplanade, or the Strand that evening.

He had business on hand, and he was hastening to attend to it.

He ordered his dinner to be served an hour earlier than usual. He made a plain business toilet, eschewing his evening costume, and when he had completed it he turned abruptly to his valet, a shaggy-looking Hindoo, and said:

"I suppose you know what I have on hand, Ganto?"

"Another trip up country?" inquired the servant.

"Just so. It is six months since I was there, Ganto. I think I'll find matters in a shape to suit me this time."

"Master has made a good many trips, full of hope, like now," said the valet, "but he always came home with a long face, and bad words in his mouth."

"I have news to take with me this time," said the merchant, an evil glow on his sinister visage. "I have a conviction that I shall conquer now. Patience always wins. I have a new weapon to use on this occasion. I never said away over three months at a time before. She'll be glad to see me, and to hear what I have to tell her. Pack my saddle-bags. We'll be off by the night train."

Mr. Bathurst dined in his cool saloon, and was served with the hot concoctions so well liked by East Indians. Then he retired to the cool, open pavilion and smoked a cigar.

The light faded. The stars appeared, soft and yellow and large as young moons. A crescent moon hung low in the sky, like a slender silver sickle. When the shadows began to thicken around the villa, and the golden glory overhead became yet more brilliant, his carriage appeared, with his coachman and valet in attendance.

The merchant entered the vehicle, and was driven to the railway station. The train was in waiting. The iron horse was snorting and moving uneasily on the rails, as eager for departure. Mr. Bathurst procured a ticket for some near point, and entered a first-class coach. His valet sought humbler quarters. And then the whistle sounded, and the train went steaming through the soft, tropical night, with its myriad stars, its delicious fragrances, its strange glamour.

Mr. Bathurst did not wait at the station to which he had booked himself. His man brought him another ticket, prepared at the station, and he went on in the train.

(To be continued.)

FADING AWAY.

CHAPTER XI.

"We will drive over to Clapham at once, sir, if you have no objection," said Bainley.

"Certainly," replied the clergyman. The carriage was ordered then, and by the time it arrived, Mr. Bainley was ready for departure.

On the way he felt very much inclined to question Mr. Hull about Ada, but he refrained from doing so. He was not quite prepared to explain anything to his newly-made friend, and believing the old words, "The least said is soonest mended," went on in silence.

"You are aware that Miss Lesson was worth a fortune?" Mr. Hull asked.

"The firm," answered Bainley, falling into his old pompon style, "banks for her. About thirty thousand, I should think. At least, the capital that could be drawn at any moment is about that amount."

He broke off then, and the minister concluded in his own mind that the old lady had other investments where the capital could not be drawn.

No more was said during the journey.

Bainley was not sorry when they arrived at the villa.

It looked very dull and cheerless with the blinds all drawn down, and the shutters in the drawing-room quite closed.

Bainley occupied in his mind now about business matters, had quite forgotten Ada, and the servant, not knowing anything of the relationship between her and the gentleman whom she knew to be Miss Lesson's brother-in-law, ushered him into the neat little sitting-room occupied now by Ada and her babe.

She started when Bainley entered.

She did not know him, for he bore no likeness to Hamilton, but the city man felt instinctively that he was standing before the girl his son had wronged and deserted.

He would not have been surprised to see that she was pretty, but he was not prepared to meet the quiet, plaintive, lady-like girl who now stood before him, pale and beautiful, with one hand resting on the edge of the child's cot, the other placed quietly on her own breast.

"Mr. Bainley, ma'am," said the servant, seeing there was an introduction wanted. "My poor mistress's brother-in-law."

"Hamilton's father?" said Ada, quickly, and then reddened, sorry that she had committed herself so soon.

Bainley answered by a slight inclination of the head.

The life-picture that he now looked upon was not without interest, even to him.

"You are Miss Ellis?" he said, looking down upon her as though she were the one to blame, and not his son.

"I am, sir. And this," she answered, with a quivering effort, "is my baby—the child of Hamilton Bainley, your son."

The banker frowned then. He did not like to hear the affair mentioned.

"Pardon me," he said; "but I have come here quite on other business, and excuse me if I go so far as to say that I did not think of meeting you here. As we have met you will do me a favour not to create a scene. The subject angers and offends me."

"I had and have no wish to create a scene, sir. Not in her house"—conveying by an upward motion of the hand whom she meant—"would I mention a subject that is wrought with dishonour and unholy shame. I did not mean to offend when I gave way to that burst of feeling. It is believed that I was alone the sinner. I trust so, for I have borne and shall have to bear punishment enough for both."

"My son was to blame," said Bainley, a little softened by the patient forbearance of the young mother; "so were you. No prudent girl would have left her home to please a man."

"Did you know the circumstances?" Ada said, breaking back her emotion, "you would be less harsh in your judgment."

"I have not come to judge you," Bainley said, with attempted grandeur, "nor is this the time for the subject to be mooted. If you have any correspondence from my son you would oblige by showing it to me."

Ada bowed.

"You were Miss Lesson's confidante and companion?"

"I was, sir."

"Is there any one here besides the clergyman?"

"Miss Lesson's lawyer is with him, sir."

"The papers and letters belonging to Miss Lesson," asked the banker, "where are they?"

"Some are in the bureau, unsorted. Those lying about I have collected and put them into a box."

"Will you mind bringing them here, with the letters you have from my son, and the keys of the bureau?"

"Those Mr. Hull has."

"Very good. I will see him afterwards, then."

Ada left the room, and as she went out cast an involuntary look towards baby, as though she feared to leave it alone with the hard man of business.

He smiled, rather more grimly than kindly when Ada had gone, and strode towards the cot. He bent low and uncovered the child's partly hidden head, and the look on his face softened as he watched the sleeping infant.

Ada was not long gone, but when she returned she found Bainley standing in another part of the room looking at a picture, with his back turned to the

cot, as though that and its little occupant were farthest from his thoughts.

Ada showed him the letters from his son—the one in which Hamilton swore he would marry her if she came to London with him.

"I see," the old man said. "I did not quite think this of Victor. He has done you a great wrong, for he has left England, and pray think nothing of it. I expect he will marry before he returns. I would not, if I were you, keep these letters; they will avail you nothing now."

Ada sighed. The "now" was said in a way that brought vividly before her the utter lonely state she was in.

She knew without any outward signs of emotion that Hamilton might marry before he returned. She expected nothing else, and being partly prepared, could hear the news.

"If, sir," she said, with a weary smile, "you think the possession of these letters would destroy in any way the power of him, the writer, or yourself, you have my permission to destroy them, though you have nothing to fear from me—nothing I assure you."

She turned away from him in tears, then, and Bainley spoke again. There were no signs of kindlier feelings in his heart betrayed by the sound of his voice.

"The harm you could do," he said, "I do not fear. I would do much more for you were you to come at once to some reasonable arrangement than I ever should do you attempt here."

"The letters are in your hands, sir. You may do as you will with them."

"The letters are mine. I could talk of myself. I am most willing, my dear girl, to make what amends I can for my son. I will take the child; it shall be well looked after and brought up as a gentleman's child should be, and you shall be well provided for, providing you will not remain in England and will renounce the child for ever."

"Never will I part with all that is left for me to love and care for, not while I can work, and I can and will. I shall go forth an outcast—go from here I know not where yet. But you, Mr. Bainley, need never fear that the name of yours shall ever be mingled with me or mine. Hamilton is safe from me. I trust that Heaven will be as lenient unto him as I am."

Ada ceased, and Bainley was silent for a time.

"Think again," he said, at last, "of my offer. Remember you will no longer find this house a home for you."

"Too well I know it. Had not the minister requested me to remain until one of Miss Lessons' kinsmen came, I should have gone yesterday. I have only now to let you see that everything here is safe, and when all is in your hands, my task is done, for I would not remain to sulky or grieve any longer; the burial of one so good by the presence of one so bad. It is very hard, for Heaven knows how I loved her—but I can go!"

And snatching baby from its cot, she flitted, with a heartrending sob, from the room.

Bainley crumpled up the letters he held in his hand, the letters written by his son to Ada, and containing the false promises that blighted the life of the poor girl. Then he went to the room, where the lawyer and Mr. Hull waited for him.

Together they went over the papers; no will could be found. But there was a letter directed to the clergyman, and which had evidently been put aside and not posted.

It contained surprised him and secretly infatuated Bainley, for it told the Rev. Mr. Hull that Miss Lessons' will destroyed the will in favour of Mr. Victor Hamilton Bainley, and that the whole family were cut out, and it was her intention to make a new, one—an intention she never lived to carry out.

"The property will go to the next of kin," said Mr. Blight, the lawyer.

"It may go to—"

The rest of the speech was lost, as Bainley while uttering the words left the house, and entering his carriage drove back to town.

Mr. Hull looked up, in blank astonishment, when Bainley went. Mr. Blight only smiled.

"It is evident he is not next of kin," he remarked drily, and the minister only smiled.

Amongst the papers was a small pocket addressed to Ada, it contained simply a bank-book and one or two receipts. The bank-book showed that from time to time good Aunt Lessons had paid in the money Hamilton had sent Ada, and added sufficient to it to make the amount something above three hundred pounds.

The lawyer placed the book and papers in Ada's hands; she was glad of it now for baby's sake.

It was not many days ere the next of kin came, a younger brother of Miss Lessons, with a stout, matter-of-fact wife and two very ill-behaved boys. They

took possession of the house, treated Ada as a sort of companion to their late relative, and as good as hinted that the sooner she went the better.

So she took her little property and her baby and went out into the cold streets in search of a home, and after much trouble she found one such as it was.

A bed-room with use of sitting-room, at twelve shillings a week, attendance and cooking included. The attendance meant that providing it was quite convenient for the landlady and servant anything wanted might be fetched, but if not convenient to one or both parties Ada might want till she got it, whatever she wanted.

Ada got in only the day before the funeral was to take place, and so the next day, dressed in neat black, she left her new and unique home for the sacred precincts of Brompton cemetery, where she awaited the arrival of poor Miss Lessons' funeral, and when it came she watched the proceedings from a hidden corner with a heart bursting in agony, and when at last the grave was filled in and the mourners gone she stole forth and knelt on the snow-lined sod, weeping as she prayed, that the shadow of good Aunt Lessons would watch over her little one whom she now held to her breast and had christened out of bonhomie to her lost friend.

"Pamela, little Phoebe."

CHAPTER XII.

THE snow melted away: the ice thawed; the cold air grew less piercing as the time went on and winter fled, followed and driven out by the first breaths of spring. Another season had gone over the head of Ada Ellis. Another was coming on.

Ada had left her first apartments. The second ones were better. The house was in the quiet part of Paddington, and always faced the river Thames. The landlady was respectable, and the rooms clean and comfortable. The change had been for the better.

Poor girl, she was quite alone now, and had been since Aunt Lessons had died. There was no change and little pleasure in the life of the outcast girl now. The pleasure was only in watching the growth of the little one, that began to bud into a beauty, and intelligence quite its own.

As yet Ada had done nothing with her money. She was waiting until baby grew strong, and could walk, before she devoted her attention to anything else. She had no one now to look to but little Phoebe. No one to love and cherish, but her, and she idolised her all the more, watching her day by day, week by week, and month by month, until winter faded into spring, spring into summer, summer into autumn, and winter would come again.

Often had she sat in the autumn twilight looking out upon the dusky river, dreaming as she used to dream, though of a far, far brighter future, and often too, while she sat lulling baby to sleep, and dreaming, had she noticed a man of splendid build, and grand features, pause under the shadow of the house, and glances up at the window wonderingly, wistfully, and as the time went on, this man came so often that at last he looked more confident, though nevertheless wistfully, and there came a time when he grew so bold, as to knock at the door of the house, and after some time spent in questioning the landlady the message was sent up that Mr. Cuthbert Milburgh wished an interview with Mrs. Ellis, and he was admitted.

The pain that he felt when he heard the story, and saw the fate of the once bright, ingenuous girl was visible in his face, and he anathematised the man under his breath who had wrought so much ruin, when he could have saved and built up a temple of never dying happiness.

Milburgh often called after that night. He spoke of his dear mother frequently, of Miss Burridge sometimes, of Hamilton never, though he deigned to mention Bainley.

Always kind, brotherly in his ways and his affection towards Ada, gentle in treating of the past, withdrawing her from all blame, and hopeful for the future, he was a companion to Ada she had never thought to find.

But things took a change under the ever active scythe of time, and the change was a startling one.

Milburgh began to talk of the old times when he had met her at Wells. He had almost loved her then, he had said, smiling sadly. He could do so now, and he did love, loved as only an honourable, open-hearted, honest young Englishman could love, and he told Ada so, begged her on his knees to forget what had happened, and go to him for ever, never, never again to live in sorrow and desolation. But Ada grew a woman then. She could admire—nay, love the man who would offer so much too well to lead him into a thing he might hereafter regret, and she bade him never speak on the subject again.

"I could love, and do love you for your kind,

generous heart so much," she had said, "that I will not, at the sacrifice of my life, ever do a thing my conscience tells me is wrong. You have by far too bright and glorious a future before you, to throw that or your life away before one so worthless. No, Mr. Milburgh, it cannot, it shall never be!"

He saw she meant it, though she could not conceal her love for the splendid fellow, but he did not ask again.

"Let me be your friend, your brother," he said, shaking back the emotion that swelled his heart to bursting. "I would give all I possess myself to make you happy. I shall never forget you, Ada, never."

He kept his word, but the dream was gone. He went from the house to that of Mr. Burridge, and sought a refuge from his painful reflection in the society of the beautiful Helen. Time and her influence erased the old feelings from his heart, and according to promise, he thought of Ada as a dear friend and sister.

Other seasons came and went. The time was drawing near for Hamilton to return to claim his love, and he came even before his time, not for that alone, but because he was called.

Mr. Burridge in consequence of a tiff with Bainley had withdrawn from the firm.

Aunt Lessons' next of kin had drawn out the thirty thousand, which sum, added to the numerous losses, and the withdrawal of the senior partner, impoverished the firm slightly, and for the first time in his life, Bainley saw the dark lane down which trouble was coming with giant strides—coming to strike down the firm of Bainley and Burridge & Co., and drag to the earth the universal bankers.

Scarce had the two first severe shocks left the firm shaking from its very foundation than a messenger brought the news that a large assurance office that had been backed up by the Bainley firm to a heavy amount, had gone to the wall, and could not pay up a shilling in the pound.

Bainley, the pompous, began to fear then. He would not desert the vessel that had floated so long.

He wanted only a little more capital to keep it afloat.

Helen Burridge had got that capital. He might have it were she married to his son.

So he wrote for Hamilton, and Hamilton came. His father had not told him all, so he came full of love and joy, with beaming, handsome face, and gladdened heart, though the last six letters he had received from Helen had been strangely cool and carefully worded.

He had felt a grave misgiving when the letters came, but he thought his presence would carry the day with Helen, as it had done nearly two years before.

He spoke of her to his father as soon as they met, and the old man was carefully laconic.

"Burridge had withdrawn from the firm," he said, quietly, "and the family were down at the country house. He wanted his son at home, as things were not going on quite as they should go, and it was dangerous to leave the beautiful Helen Burridge so long alone, and in the temptation of society."

In fact he wanted to see his son settled, to install him in his position, and bring about the winding up of his own commercial career.

Hamilton listened to it all, and anxious to leave at once for the home of his promised bride, he did not see in his father's manner anything to doubt and wonder at.

He had no idea of the great crisis that was coming on, how mercilessly trouble had laid its hand upon the house, that it might be numbered to the many commercial wrecks that sink beneath the rushing vortex—ruin.

Hamilton did not write to Helen, but he took the train to Oxford, and presented himself at her father's out-of-town house, thinking the reception would be a joyful one.

The servant—one who knew him—did not show a very favourable countenance.

Burridge was at home, so was Miss Helen and her mother.

The domestic said, would the gentleman wait to be announced.

The gentleman would not. The mention of his beautiful Helen being within his reach sent the blood rushing to his heart, and with the ardour of his love stamped upon his face, he went in, and the servant uttered his name.

Mr. Burridge rose in a little confusion.

"Good Heavens, Hamilton—Mr. Bainley, I mean—who would have expected to see you yet?"

Hamilton had made a rush at Helen, but the stately girl rose from her seat, and putting him back with a quiet but firm motion of the hand, said:

"This is a great surprise, Mr. Bainley."



[THE BANKER'S VISIT.]

Hamilton started back as though he had been struck a heavy blow, though no blow could have fallen half so heavy on him as those words did upon his heart.

"Helen," he said, going so white that Miss Burridge thought he would fall in a faint, "tell me; what does this mean. I did not expect to be greeted like this—by you—you whom my heart has dwelt upon for so long—who I have never ceased to love and adore with all the strength of my heart!"

"Mr. Bainley, such discourse is unpleasant!" she said, "and I cannot admire the taste of a man who would come here as you have, and thrust yourself in upon us without any warning!"

She would have left the room, but Hamilton stood in her path. Mr. Burridge and his wife had left the room for a time, and as the once dissolute man had no interruption to prevent an explanation.

"Helen, Miss Burridge," he said, "I cannot understand this. I will demand an explanation of your father!"

"My father," said Helen, "will no doubt give you one. But remember before I go that he cannot control my heart, nor make me give my hand to a man who I might have loved once, because I thought you what you seemed, but now despise, because I see you what you are, Hamilton Bainley. How dared you come to me after the wrong you had committed to one of my sex—the poor girl you brought from Wells and left to die an outcast? Never, sir, dare to look me in the face until you can come and say that you have acted like a man of honour, and not like a paltry sneak and coward!"

She went from the room, leaving Hamilton speechless with surprise and mortification.

He saw the father then. Mr. Burridge met him in his own gentlemanly, grave way, with a snuff-box in one hand and a pinch of snuff between his thumb and forefinger.

He had given his daughter, he said, when he thought she had bestowed her love upon Hamilton; he had not bartered her for money, nor under a compact that would in any way endanger the happiness of his child. If Mr. Hamilton had done wrong, and he knew best, and that wrong was made known to Helen, he, Mr. Hamilton Bainley, could not be surprised to be rejected by a girl who had been brought up in honour and humanity, and whose soul revolted at a wrong so great as the one that had been laid at the door of Hamilton. He could not say any more in the matter, the old man went on by way of conclusion. The choice of a husband was entirely in the hands of his daughter, and he was sorry that Mr. Hamilton had not been a better man; he would

have had nothing to regret now. He was sorry things had turned out as they had, but it could not be helped.

The conference ended thus.

"A shameful sham got up to cloak that faithless deceit of a fickle, unworthy woman!" Hamilton said, as he went out; and then he bowed his head and clenched his hands.

Humbled to the dust, stricken home, even he gave way to the pain of his grief, for he had loved Helen too well to lose her so.

He was an altered man when he got outside. The heavy brow was low and the step uncertain.

He met a man coming towards him—a big, stately fellow with a martial form and tread that seemed a little familiar.

He looked up. It was Milburgh.

Both men started, and Milburgh paused, but Hamilton went on, casting a look so hopeless and weary upon him that the first feelings that prompted Cuthbert to catch him by the throat and hurl him to the ground died away, and he thought he would defer what he had to say for another occasion.

Guessing what had happened, he went into the house, and, going straight to Helen, he took her in his arms.

"Dear one," he said, kissing her, "you have taught him the agony of disappointed love and broken hopes."

Hamilton, turning at that moment, saw the shadow of the young people on the blind.

"It was for him. He has done this, Heaven blight him!" And he rushed from the place and took the first train back to London.

Hamilton did not see his father on his return.

Bainley was out of town for a day or two; no one knew where he had gone, not even Hamilton's step-mother, though she threw out dark hints concerning great troubles that were rising up around Bainley, that he had been a foolish man to do so and so, and that he now saw the folly of it all.

The fact was that Bainley had been less pompous of late; he showed up in society less and gave fewer dinners, was not so attentive to his wife and kept her on a smaller supply of cash. And she began to show her discontent in temper.

Hamilton saw a great change was coming over the house, his mother was changed towards his father, his father was an altered man, and he began to fear the worst. When at last Bainley returned he told him of Helen's faithlessness the old man turned white.

"Is it quite broken off, my son?"

"Quite, see here is an announcement that she will shortly be married to Mr. Cuthbert Milburgh, barrister-at-law."

"It can't be helped—it can't be helped," said Bainley the elder, with a haggard look upon his face. "My son, the greatest structures men build on earth fall to the ground and decay away until in dust they go from us for ever. We must bear the worst, my son. The firm is no longer one of the wealthiest in the city, it is one of the poorest, swallowed by the confounded failures, and Bainley, my son, must sink with the firm."

His wife entering the room heard the words and she went pale as death. It was nonsense, she said, he was getting old and stupid, and she wouldn't remain with a man who was getting a beggar.

Then she told him that she had given a dinner for that night, and he must attend. Bainley heard it in silence, his courage was gone, and he could no longer lift his head to command, and so he obeyed. He was out again during the day and his son presided at the table in his place, trying to honour his mother-in-law's friends.

Bainley came at last, he looked more tired, more careworn than ever. The dinner was nearly over, and he would not have his plate laid.

"Gentlemen and friends," he said, absently, and taking up a glass of wine, "here is health to you all."

He put down the glass, having drank the wine, and stretched out his hand to receive a telegram that was brought into him. He begged to be excused and retired to read it. The ladies, surprised at his previous strange conduct, left the table with Mrs. Bainley, and the gentlemen were alone.

The telegram informed him that a revolution had broken out in Spain and that there was a panic. The banker read the message, and with a petrified sort of stare and a slow motion of the hand across his eyes he went up to his room as a cry from his loving friends in the dining-room rang out:

"Long live Bainley!"

What an inappropriate cry. What mockery! At that moment the man they wished a long life stood in the centre of his room with death in his heart and hand, death before him, and as the cry rang out again it was answered by a loud report, and the guests rushing to where the sound proceeded found Bainley, the great and wealthy, lying dead on his back weltering in his blood, shot by his own hand. The man who had never seen trouble courted death when the other came to escape the finger of ruin.

(To be continued.)



[IN HER SIRE'S DEFENCE.]

REUBEN;

OR,

ONLY A GIPSY.

CHAPTER XLIV.

SIR EDWARD had been indisposed on the morning and had grown suddenly weak and absent minded again, just as he had been before the political dinner, so that the whole responsibility of preparation was thrown upon Olive.

With a heavy heart, more for her father's relapse than at Morgan's approach, for she despised him too much to fear him, she made what hasty arrangements as were possible, and Sir Edward and she sat in the drawing-room expectant.

As the drag clattered up, Sir Edward started, and Olive's heart for a moment seemed to sink within her, for she saw what Morgan had done.

In five minutes Captain Raffles and his clique were bowing and smirking before Sir Edward, who received them as if they were the noblest in the land, his absent air strongly marked.

"Well, Olive," said Morgan, "brought my friends, you see? Awfully kind of you to take them in."

Olive touched his outstretched hand and glided to her room.

There, in an agony of rage and despair, she threw up her arms and turned her white face heavenwards.

In the midst of her misery it was actually a source of thankfulness to her that her father seemed unconscious of the character of his guests.

She dressed in deep black velvet; with black ribbons, and, white and majestic, but with a beauty made lustrous by her sombre attire, descended to the dining-room.

The dinner proceeded, the "gentlemen" behaving themselves, doubtless awed by her presence, pretty well, but when she rose it seemed a signal for their superabundant spirits to free themselves.

Fast and frequent the decanters went round, the laughter grew more hilarious, the conversation more broad.

Poor Sir Edward sat through it all with a meekly smiling face, which, in its piteous, senile cheerfulness would have touched a heart of stone.

But the gentlemen around him were harder than stones, and rattled on with tongue and glass and decanter until the stately walls resounded to their boisterous, vulgar carousing.

Upstairs, in her own room, Olive heard it all and understood it all.

It was Morgan Verner's revenge for the resentment she had shown when he had attempted to kiss her.

And to this she and her poor, devoted father might have to submit for days, perhaps weeks.

Better the wide, wide, homeless world.

She rose and glided downstairs.

The dining-room door was open, and she could see the drunken crew within.

With his feet on a chair sat Morgan Verner, his face flushed, his eyes gleaming viciously.

Near him sat Captain Raffles, clutching a decanter, his wide mouth closed upon a cigar.

The rest of the company were lounging in various attitudes and in different stages of intoxication, and at the head of them sat the patient, broken hearted old baronet, amiably smiling on all, unconscious of his degradation.

"I'll bet a thousand to a pony that Sir Edward can s-s-sing us a song!" hiccupped Captain Raffles, in answer to a question from one of his friends.

"Sir Edward, we shall be hon-honoured if you'll pipe up! Let's have one of the right sort—with a chorus. Re-tol-de-ro, you know?" And he looked round with a drunken wink and leer that set the others roaring with infinite enjoyment.

"Gentlemen," said Sir Edward, mildly, "I assure you I have not sung for years. I should only be too happy—"

"Go on, then, Raf—give us Tipsy-Wippit," struck in a voice, "and we'll call upon Sir Edward afterwards."

Thereupon Captain Raffles held up his glass and was about to delight the company, when Sir Edward, with a start, as if he had just awakened to what was going on, rose indignantly.

There was a moment's silence.

Captain Raffles struck up a note, and Sir Edward sank into the chair with his head drooping upon his breast.

"Hallo! the old gentleman's knocked under!" exclaimed one.

"Nonsense," hiccupped another. "He hasn't drunk enough to make a canary wink. I've watched him!"

"Then he's queer," said Morgan Verner. "Leave him to me, gentlemen. Go on, Raf." And he rose

from his chair with a display of tipsy consequence.

Before he could reach the motionless figure of the old man, Olive, black and awful in her wrath and scorn, had glided to her father's side, and, drawing his white head to her bosom, confronted them, as if she would shield him from their touch.

Morgan Verner shrank back before her flashing eyes, then turned with unsteady movement to his friends.

"Here's—here's Miss Seymour. Better go, oh? The old gentleman's queer."

His proposal was assented to with alacrity, and the room was clear of Captain Raffles and his boon companions before Olive had time to ring for the servants, who, astounded and alarmed at the unusual behaviour of the guests, had clustered near the door, listening and waiting to see what wonderful things would happen next.

In ten minutes grooms were riding in different directions for doctors, and all was in confusion.

The news reached the Grange that Sir Edward had been stricken down by a paralytic fit, and the appearance of Morgan and his friends in the courtyard with the drag confirmed the tidings.

Morgan was partially sobered by the sudden and dramatic termination of his scheme for revenge, but Captain Raffles had seized upon it as an excuse to imbibe a few restorative glasses of brandy, and was quite drunk.

So were many others, and, as they were led away to the rooms which Morgan had declared they should not occupy, their tipsy cries echoed through the Grange grounds.

John Verner stood before his son, white with passion and alarm.

"Beast—idiot!" he hissed. "This is your doing!"

"What is? Could I help the old man knocking under?" said Morgan, sullenly. "Besides, what does it matter?" he added, brutally. "If he dies there's plenty to take his place. What does it matter?"

"Only this, my dear Morgan," said Mr. Normanby, who had entered the room noiselessly, and now stood beside him with a smiling face, "that Dingley being entailed, our claim upon it dies with the decease of the worthy Sir Edward, and that Miss Olive would escape your clutches—that is all!"

"Is that true?" stammered Morgan.

"As true as I am," said Mr. Normanby, nodding his head slowly and rolling up a cigarette. "So, mon ami, pray that your respected father-in-law elect may live until your marriage with the beautiful Miss Seymour is a consummated fact."

"She can't escape anyhow!" muttered Morgan.
"Idiot!" said his father. "Are you so blind and conceited as not to see that it is only for her father's sake that she falls into our hands? Let him die, and she'd rather see Dingley Hall burnt to the ground and all the land swallowed up in the flames than become the wife of such a wretch as you! Heavens! that I should be hampered with such a son! Better have left the dark work undone!"

He stopped abruptly and, frowning darkly, paced the room.

"What is to be done?" he demanded, sternly, of Mr. Normanby, who was lounging against the mantel-piece, as if he were Fate itself.

"I have done all that can be done," replied Normanby, glancing at his watch. "I have sent a groom with a brougham to fetch one of the doctors here. He should have arrived by this time."

"Here he is," said Morgan; and he stood in the room as one of the doctors who had been sent to Dingley was ushered in.

"Well?" asked John Verner.

The doctor smiled professionally. "How do you do, my dear sir. Mr. Normanby, I congratulate you on your recent election—not un-toasted, of course not. We know what is right in these parts. But you wished to hear about the patient?"

"Is—he alive?" asked John Verner, faintly. "Yes, yes, my dear sir. While there is life there is hope. But it is a serious case—very serious."

John Verner passed the room.

"Do you think he will get over it? Encyclopaedia, of course?" said Normanby.

"Well, no, not exactly," replied the doctor. "A fainting fit, produced by weakness of the brain. An uncommon case, my dear Mr. Normanby, and one in which we doctors can be of very little use."

He turned to John Verner, who stood regarding him with darkling eyes.

"Sir Edward has had some trouble lately—heavy monetary troubles, and they have weighed upon him, beaten him down, I may say, and the only thing that can help him is thorough change."

"He—he will live, then?" said John Verner, with a sigh of relief.

"Yes, I think so," said the doctor, guardedly. "The only thing that can enable him to get the better of this peculiar brain malady is a decided change—a sea voyage, for instance—something quite new and fresh. No place where he would meet with associations—you understand. Yes, exactly. Quite a change."

Normanby looked at the dark face of the master of the Grange, who took the hint conveyed by the glance.

"I am Sir Edward's nearest friend," he said, "and I will follow your advice for him, Dr. Slade. You may rely on me."

"Yes, yes," said the doctor. "All my brethren agree with me. A change is the thing. Let Miss Seymour take him abroad—a change will do his good—and we engage that they will both come back as well as ever."

CHAPTER XLV.

We left Reuben—or Arthur, as his companions in the new world knew him—alone, and without any clue to the whereabouts of his friend, Lord Craven, alias Walter Wildair.

While the former stood ruminating over the dead body of the cowardly posticker, his friend was scouring across a plain with the lithe figure of the rescued maiden before him, and the setting sun gleaming in his rear.

He had ridden in the direction indicated by Arthur, and expected each moment to see his airy, stalwart, frame upon the horizon, but no Arthur appeared, and at last, bewildered and anxious, Lord Craven turned aside to a ravine which commanded a view of the plain, and dismounting, carefully lifted the maiden from the saddle to the ground.

A wild stream, turning to a torrent a little lower down, ran through the ravine, and Lord Craven, with eager haste, filled his sombre robe with water, and bathed the face of his charge.

After a few minutes the pale lips took a dash of colour, and opened to allow a faint sigh.

Then a pair of violet eyes turned questioningly upon the face of her preserver, and the face took alarm.

Only for instant, the next, as if in apology for the look of dread, she slipped a little brown hand into his, and quietly cried.

Lord Craven could, and had, ridden up to a five pound battery, but a woman's—and a beautiful woman's—tears were an artillery not to be resisted.

His own dark, true eyes, filled slowly, and then

with an impatient gesture he drew his hand across them.

"You are better," he said.

She nodded, then raised her head on her arm, and looked round.

"We are a long way off?" she shuddered. "The post offices are not near?"

"Not within thirty miles," said Lord Craven. "You are quite safe, quite," he added, significantly.

She looked up at him.

"You saved me from them," she said, "you are very brave to attack them single-handed. I know what they are."

And she shuddered again.

"Have they attacked your father—your farm before?" asked Lord Craven.

"Yes," said the girl, with a sigh. "Two or three times—always when Father was out."

"Oh!" said Lord Craven, hopefully. "Was he from home today?"

"Yes," she replied, thankful, "oh, yes, or I would rather have died. The cowards would not come while he was at home!" she added, her eyes flashing. "They know and despise him!"

"He is strong and powerful?" said Lord Craven.

The girl nodded, then looked round.

"I don't exactly say," replied Lord Craven, smiling cheerfully, though as a matter-of-fact, he was very anxious for her sake, not his own. "But where you are, you are quite safe for the present, and before night I will try and place you in hands more worthy and able to protect you."

"I feel quite safe?" she said. "I am a digger, are you not?"

"Yes," said Lord Craven; "I am a digger—my name is Walter."

The girl nodded and stood upright. Like a strong savage, now that her name had quite gone.

"My name is Mary—Mary Burns," she said, slowly, and with open坦率.

"Mary!" repeated Lord Craven, desisting from his occupation of gathering dry twigs for his fire, to look up at her beautiful face, and to wonder whether he had ever seen more wonderful hair than that which flowed in a rippling stream, down her shoulders.

"Do you feel faint—hungry?" he asked.

"No—yes," she said, with a sigh. "I am too anxious to eat. Poor John—and William!"

And she cried again, quietly.

"They are dead; I saw them shot! Oh, dear; why are such wicked men as fossickers allowed to live?"

"They shouldn't if I had my will," said Lord Craven, grimly.

He lit the fire as he spoke, and drew from his wallet a few slices of dried meat which, with a skill he had acquired by watching Reuben, he boiled in his tin-drinking-cup.

"Now," he said, "you must eat these while I take a look round. I expected to meet a very dear friend of mine."

The girl, who had obviously taken a portion of the meat, glanced up shyly.

"A very dear friend of mine who helped—may more than helped, nay, got clear from those villains! I hope—"

Her face blanched heavily, as a sharp pang of dread fell across her heart.

"You risked both yourselves to save mine!" said the girl, setting down the cup. "You are Englishmen!"

"Yes," said Lord Craven, "and he is the best that ever the little island turned out. I'd give all I'm worth, and more, to have him near me now. But come, you must eat the broth—which is it—and I'll see to the horse. Can you tell anything about one's whereabouts, or give a guess at the position of the farm?"

The girl pondered.

"No," she said, sadly. "I think a farm of a friend of my father's lies yonder—but I'm not sure."

"How many miles?" asked Lord Craven.

"Thirty," answered Mary.

Lord Craven nodded.

It would be quite impossible to reach that haven-

to-night, and he felt anxious.

He glanced at the girl, and beyond the look of sadness which had already turned to a sweet resignation—so used was she to scenes of violence and danger—no anxiety seemed to harass her.

"If we cannot reach your friend's farm, to-night," said Lord Craven, "I will make up a large fire under the rocks there, and you must rest. To-morrow we will make a trial of the road, and trust to chance. You are not afraid?" he asked, gently.

"No," she said. "Father is safe, and he will be back to-morrow, and send in search of me. I am not afraid."

"You have a kind heart, and know how to show gratitude," murmured Lord Craven. "There is no need to fear, you are as safe as if you were under your father's roof."

And then arranging his coat near the fire, so that she might recline comfortably, he drew the saddle-blanket over her and made up the fire.

Then he stile away to a little distance, and laid in wait for some game, returning in about a quarter of an hour with some birds.

His companion welcomed him with a smile, and insisted upon plucking one of the pigeons, and so the two sat opposite each other, hard at work preparing their next meal.

They talked as only two persons placed in such a position could talk—with a sadness on her part which sprang from the consciousness of innocence—and on his, with that frank, courageous reverence and tenderness for a woman which is the birthright of an English gentleman.

He had much to say about his friend, and she said that he loved her.

On her part she told him her story with an ingenuousness which lent it a characteristic style, however cultivated, could have given it.

"My father has been stock-raising since I don't know how long. I was born here—down the farm. I have no sisters or brothers, or mother—only my father. Have you any sisters or brothers?"

"No," said Lord Craven, turning the pigeon on the spit, "I am all alone in the world!"

The girl opened her violet eyes with that sweet look of pity and tenderness which goes down to the heart of a man.

"All alone," she said, softly. "And have you had bad luck—digging I mean?"

"Yes," he said, suddenly. "Oh, very good luck—"

And he threw his belt of gold before her.

With a woman's pleasure in riches, she turned the fingers over.

"You are rich!" she said. "I am so glad!"

"Are you?" he said, with a sudden pleasure.

"Yes; it must be so nice to be rich, because you can go to England. You will go, of course?"

"Yes—no—I don't know!" he said. "Have you any wish to see England, then?"

"Of course!" she said, opening her eyes. "Every one has; oh, every one; I do so like to hear about it. Will you tell me what it is like?"

Lord Craven looked slightly astounded and floured, but he tried to describe something of English life, and she listened with grave, wondering eyes.

Then at last he rose.

"I will go and see that the horse is safe," he said, "and light your fire under the cliff. You will want some rest, and in the morning we can start. You must not be anxious; we shall be sure to find some farm or settlement near."

She looked up at him with a half-sigh which parted her lips into a gentle bewitching smile, and he went off to to her, the horse.

When he came back he found that she had slipped down upon his coat, and had fallen asleep, her sweet face resting on his little brown hand, and her wealth of hair covering her neck and shoulders like silken fleece.

With a reverent touch he drew the blanket over her, and treading lightly, made his way to the stream.

At its side he passed through the hours of the night, keeping watch and ward, and wondering what it was about the Little Australian maiden which kept haunting his heart, and awakening memories and feelings he had thought dead and faded for ever.

CHAPTER XLVI.

LEAVING Lord Craven mounting guard over the slumbers of the young life he had rescued, let us return to Reuben and his fortunes.

He stood beside his horse, the possessor of immense wealth, all of which, it is scarcely too much to say, he would have paid for the assurance that Lord Craven, his best comrade, was safe and sound.

The two men, during the months which they had spent together, sharing good and ill-luck, joy and rest, food and bed, had shown an affection and friendship for each other which was almost fraternal.

Very bitterly, then, did Reuben sigh as he mounted his steed, and a smile which was the perfection of that gesture which a man whom Fate has served roughly was upon his lips, as he muttered:

"Always thus! Death robs me of my friends and those I have loved, but an inexorable fate steps in between us and, pointing the finger of derision, says: 'Begone, outcast, and alone!' Now, whither shall I go? This gold weighs upon me like a load of lead. It makes itself a letter, for I am not free until I have delivered one half of it to my partners. And they—where are they?"

Letting the reins drop on the horse's neck, he resigned himself to a moody reverie.

The animal wandered on through the undergrowth for some time, but at last, as darkness fell, concluding that its rider had forgotten bed-time, and standing stock still, threw up its head with a whinny neigh.

Reuben started, raised himself, and made preparations for a night's bivouac.

These were soon completed, and with that fertility of resource which is the diggers' and pioneers' best companion, he had scraped together, by the aid of his revolver, a rough supper, lit a fire, and, picking up the horse, near at hand, retired to his blanket.

Scarcely three hours had passed when dawn broke, and, waking with the first flush, he sat out on his purposeless journey.

A record of the week's toilsome progress would be monotonous.

The solitude was intense. To the horse alone could he speak, and the sound of his voice startled himself as much as it did the animal.

Towards the end of the seventh day he had made some approach to the outskirts of the great digging district, and unconsciously was nearing Ballarat.

In this neighbourhood night-fossickers abounded, and unconsciously the solitary traveller was riding a path of imminent peril and death.

Gangs of miscreants haunted the outskirts of the digging stations in the hope of plunder, and outrage of the most fearful kind had been perpetrated by the reckless outlaws and scum of Europe.

Not only property, but liberty and life themselves were in danger, and the colonial papers were full of horrible stories of capture, torture, and extorted ransoms.

So skilfully were the various robberies carried through that the thieves had, hitherto escaped the hands of the trained and mounted colonial police, and it was rumoured that one gang, led by a man called Black Bell, had captured and offered for ransom no less than a score of unfortunate diggers and travellers, and had amassed plunder to the amount of one hundred thousand pounds.

Through the wild haunts by these merciless ruffians Reuben rode, unconscious and fearless, and it was not until his horse, whose sagacity was remarkable, had shied at the remains of a campfire that Reuben discovered his proximity to human kind again.

On the seventh evening he was riding down a small valley, thinking of Lord Greave and trying vainly to suppress the homesickness which was rising in his bosom, when his horse started slightly, set up his ears, and nuzzled the side with a sharp, inquisitive shake of the head.

Before Reuben could do more than tighten the reins, a sharp report rang out on the clear air, and a bullet whizzed through his side, singeing some hair.

With a quick movement he threw himself flat upon the horse's neck, and dashed, as was his wont, straight for the spot whence the thin curl of smoke which followed the report had risen.

With his revolver drawn and ready and his bowie knife close at hand, Reuben dashed into the bush.

Not a soul was to be seen, and, as he sat bolt upright in his saddle, he felt with a grim fierceness that his minutes were numbered, that a dozen revolvers were pointed at him, and were waiting, but some movement on his part as a signal to fire.

Not a muscle of his tanned face displayed this feeling, and as he sat calm and expectant, he might have sat for a study of "Courage" personified.

No attack came, and, determined to put an end to the suspense, he suddenly raised his revolver and took aim at the bush.

In an instant a dozen men had sprung up, apparently from the bowels of the earth, and had seized him.

His revolver was dashed upon the ground, a band was slung round his face, and a cold bowie knife was significantly laid broadways across his throat.

The twilight suddenly had grown into darkness, and it was only by the sound of the flint and steel that Reuben could tell that his captors had lighted their torches.

He was borne along blindfold for some moments and then thrown upon the ground, with one word of caution.

"Silence!"

He deemed it best to obey, and lay on his elbow, silent and motionless.

His captors then withdrew, and apparently held an animated conference, of which the words "scout," "spy," "chap in advance," fell across Reuben's ears.

Somewhat pained to account for the mysterious conduct of the fossickers, he was about to take the

initiative by tearing the bandage from his eyes, quite unconscious that two guards sat beside him with revolvers pointed, when one of the gang approached and addressed him.

"I want a few words with you," he said. "And first—no humbug, for we know you—how many are you, and how far are you off?"

Reuben smiled.

"In the first place, friend, you have the advantage of me, for I have not the honour of your acquaintance. In the second, we are, not a numerous company; and, in the third, I should say, speaking by guesswork, that we are three feet from where you stand."

The man cracked his revolver against his hand significantly.

"Come," he said, roughly, "that won't go down. I give you two minutes to own up, where the rest of your bad vagabonds are, or—" And he clicked the cock of his Colt.

Footsteps drew near. An intense silence reigned. Reuben smiled scornfully.

"I don't understand your question, and I don't care to." End the catechism and blaze away, my friend." And he half rose.

This movement saved his life, for his interlocutor fired on the instant, and the bullet passed Reuben's ear.

With a savage growl, Reuben tore the bandage from his eyes and made one spring at the figure before him.

A confusion, short and sharp, reigned, and then a awful stillness, more awful still, as the tall war-flags, crushed to the earth, looked up at a dozen bowie knives thirsting for his blood.

They poised, they almost descended.

"Stop!" cried a voice, at the sound of which Reuben's heart leapt. "Murder!—a thousand devils! What are you doing? Give me a song! By Heaven, I thought so!"

And the speaker, a short, stumpy man, made a clean sweep with his torch, before which the murderous knives scattered like chaff, and then the recorer flung himself down, and shook the prostrate man's hand.

"Why, you darning idiots, it's Arthur—old Grim, Heaven and earth! Another minute, and you'd have carved me!"

"Arthur, Grim!" echoed a score of voices, as the torches flashed round the respite. "So, it is! Shake hands, old man! Why didn't you speak up? By Jove! we might have known it was you by your confounded, croaking! Welcome back!" And, amidst a thousand expletives, of goodwill and apology, Reuben rose, and was herded and hustled to the fire.

And then, with a mug of liquor in his strong, steady hand and surrounded by the eager and anxious group who told him something of his adventures,

"We've had no luck, or rather we've had good and bad luck," said one, scornfully. "When we left you in the gorge—darners properly speaking, you left us—we made for Ballarat, working our road. No luck till we got to the old station, and there dead here hit upon a big find, and we spread out and worked it. Got some luck then, and altogether we were doing pretty well, and was a swishing you were amongst us, when one night old Jem was missing when the grog came round. Some of us had seen him going down to the caissons, and there was as end of him.

"Well, we searched round and sent out parties of two days, and then made up our minds the old fellow had stumbled down one of the old shafts. Two nights afterwards a strange fellow rides into camp and asks hard and brace for the captain.

"I up and told him he wanted to know anything I'd talk him, and he says, cool as a cucumber, 'Akin adaisipker! We've got one o' your mates, by the name o' Jem; and if I don't take back two hundred pounds worth o' gold they'll shoot him.' I've got till sunrise to-morrow."

"Our boy's awake up and 'm him in a minute, but he wouldn't be doleful at all and he says, says he, 'My name's Black Bell, and if harm comes to me your mate will be roasted in a slow fire.'

"What was to be done? Why, only one thing. We arranged that I was to take the nuggets—full weight—to the rockin' stones at Devil's Gang, and leave it there for half an hour, and then Jem was to be delivered up.

"I went in the night, pitch dark, and took the ransom, and sure enough, half an hour after I'd put it on the stone, I went back and found old Jem sitting there blindfolded, and I thought at the time he was worth three times the money."

Here all eyes were directed in a kindly stare and smile at modest Jem, who sat puffing at his pipe in bashful silence.

"Well, you see," said George, cheerfully, "that about cleared us out, and then, as we'd worked the claim dry, we moved on here. Some of us see you riding along so bold, and the new chap—a mate who'd joined us after you left—thought that you must be Black Bell, and fired on you. You know the rest. Have some more liquor, and tell us your luck."

Reuben filled his can and nodded a silent toast all round, then, secretly enjoying in anticipation the delight of his honest friends, he said:

"Mine's too long a story, and too slow, I'm afraid. I've told you about finding and losing my comrade, and now I've got to make my official report." And he drew his map from his pocket as he spoke. "I hope I've done my duty, and if the luck hasn't been as good as I could have hoped you won't blame me."

"No, no, never mind. Glad to see you back," they murmured, heartily.

"Thanks, thanks," said Reuben, not unmoved.

Then he said suddenly, with a pleasant smile:

"Where's the grubster?"

The man who had made his departure so unpleasant put his head forward.

"I suppose you mean me," he said, amidst a general laugh. "I told you you wouldn't do much up in the hills. Didn't I say so?"

"You did," said Reuben, "and so it's only fair that you should be the first to be disappointed. There's the luck, and you shall be cashier and accountant." And so saying, he unbuckled his precious belt and dropped its bulky weight into the man's hand.

There was profound silence for a moment, then a sharp, deep cry of delight:

"Hurrash for old Grim!"

"Hush, hush! You'll have the fossickers scent it soon enough without crying Tally-ho!" said George, warningly; and, eagerly, he ripped up the belt and poured out the precious lumps before the crowd of excited and enraptured eyes.

Then Reuben drew from his boots, from his deep pockets, from the lining of his hat, from all kinds of hiding places, about his clothes, compact, heavy packets of gold dust and modestly added them to the heap.

"That's a sample," he said, "of what lies up yonder for those who like to climb for it."

Only the wise fear of announcing their sudden wealth to the prowling digger-thieves prevented them from venting their enthusiasm in loud hurrahs.

As it was, they crowded round their pioneer and wrung his hand, and pressed the grog upon him.

He was their hero, their good fortune, and had a kingdom been at their disposal they would have crowned him despotic monarch on the spot.

Then they drew apart in a hasty conference, George coming forward in a few minutes afterwards with stumbling words, earnest and eager.

"Arthur, we've talked it over, and we're all of one mind—Grubster and all. This here belongs to you, every ounce of it, and yours it shall be! We won't touch it. You found it, and you've put us on to the spots where we can find it for ourselves. We're off to-morrow, and you can go with us; but this here is yours, and as spokesman I lay it at your feet."

Reuben's face flushed, and his voice trembled slightly as he grasped the honest fellow's hand.

"No, no," he said, firmly. "However much I might want gold I'd give the whole of it for such another night as this. No, the half of it is yours, and I will not touch an ounce more than my due. Your trust in me is worth more than the other half, and, with all my heart, I think it more precious than the whole."

And, though they talked and pressed it on him they could not prevail upon him to accept more than the share he had bargained for, and at last, very reluctantly, George made the division.

"Then, sleep being impossible, they gathered round the fire eagerly canvassing their prospects, and planning out their route from the chart which Reuben had drawn for them.

The dawn broke. Reuben had stretched himself to sleep in one of the tents, and preparations for departure were busily in hand.

Reuben's tent was the last unstruck, and the gang were waiting in groups reluctant to wake him yet eager to start.

Promised the curtain swung aside, and he stepped out calm and smiling, to break the news that he did not accompany them!

A stare of amazement and then a murmur of disappointment, followed by a volley of persuasion.

But all to no purpose. Simply and quietly Reuben told them that he was rich beyond all he could wish, and that—then he paused. "Friends," he

said, after a moment's silence, "two things prevent me from making one of you. I've more money than I want, and I've lost a friend that I must find before I can get any satisfaction out of nuggets or dust. You've got the chart, you know the way. The world's small, and we shall meet again. I won't say good-bye, believe me, for you'll find me hereabouts"—then he stopped again, and an uneasy feeling shot through him, "unless I get too home sick to stay. Good-bye, George, Jim," and with a hasty but hearty hand-shake, he made his fare-well.

All that they could do was to press upon him such weapons as were necessary for parting gifts, and to send him on his way with a hearty cheer and a genuine rough gratitude.

As the gang marched towards the hills, Reuben rode slowly towards Ballarat, drawn thither by a secret impulse which, as usual, guided his restless steps.

Round his waist was the half of the treasure which he had, after months and months of weary toil, torn from the bowels of mother earth.

(To be continued.)

A SILENT WOMAN.

In a popular novel a woman is introduced who, being mortally offended, declared she would never speak again. Critics pronounced the incident unnatural and impossible. It was neither; for here we have the fact on which the incident was founded. Madame Rignier, the wife of a law officer at Versailles, while talking in the presence of a numerous party, dropped some remarks which were out of place, though not important. Her husband reprimanded her before the whole company, saying: "Silence, madame; you are an idiot!" The lady immediately subsided. She lived twenty or thirty years afterward, and never uttered a single word to any living soul, not even to her children. A pretended theft was committed in her presence, but without effect; nothing could induce her to speak. When her consent was requisite for the marriage of any of her children, she bowed her head, and signed the contract; and even when she died she merely sighed "Adieu."

SUNKEN TREASURE.

THEY are at work again on the sunken frigate "Hussar," at Hell-Gate, New York. She is supposed to contain five million dollars in gold brought over during the Revolutionary war to pay King George's troops. In the hazardous attempt to pass Hell-Gate she struck a rock and went down with seventy American prisoners on board. Attempts were made to get possession of the sunken treasure by the British Government in 1794, and by a company formed in 1819, but the appliances then in vogue were not equal to the difficulties to be encountered. Over twenty years ago the New England Submarine Company was organised with this object, and more recently the Frigate Hussar Company, which united with the other in the work. Three years since they suspended operations, which have now been resumed with improved machinery. So far they have only succeeded in obtaining the bones of the drowned American prisoners and a number of warlike mementos of the wreck. It appears that the ballast of the vessel lying above and around the treasure has been converted by the action of the waves into a compact mass, which has to be drilled or blasted before the prize can be reached, and the engineering difficulties presented by this particular locality are very great.

THE STAR OF HIS DESTINY.

CHAPTER III.

MURAD BEY laughed at the news, and said with a sneer:

"They shall meet the doom they deserve—not a man shall live to tell the tale!"

"That may be the fate of your own forces," I observed; "as for me, if they storm the city, I shall hope to escape."

"Thank you Claude Arnaud will rise from the sands of the desert, to snatch my prize from my grasp?" he asked, in his most sarcastic tone, for he had repeatedly assured me you were dead."

"And did you believe him, Zoe?"

"I feared it was true, and when your troops began to storm the city, I went up to the terrace on the house-top; with some of the jewellery my benefactor had given me for attending her when she was ill, and which I considered mine, I bribed one of my waiting women to let me pass."

"The Mameluke would not have allowed you the liberty."

"Oh, no! yonder door's barred on the other side with iron."

"And yet, Murad Bey taunted me when we met on the battle-field, by declaring that you were watching the fight, as if you had learned to care for him, and pray for his success."

"False man," cried Zoe, her foot beating an impatient tattoo; "I went there to gaze with my whole soul in my eyes at your troops. I love my country; but I hate one, at least, of its defenders, and amid your ranks I looked for you!"

"Did you recognise me before the town was surrendered?"

"I fancied I did, but I was by no means certain; the battle was so terrific, the rush of the horses so swift, and the clash of your weapons so incessant, I could not long keep any of you in sight. Still, when shouts of, 'Cairo is lost! the city is surrendered to the Christians, and our warriors lie wounded and dead, or are fleeing for their lives,' I began to hope the hour of my deliverance was at hand. I thought you might be living, and I called a Nubian slave who had seemed to be friendly to me, and gave him the ring, and a message which he was to deliver to you if you were alive, and if not, to Napoleon himself. I should not have dared trouble you, had it not been for your promise."

"Mon Dieu! I told you once I would spill the last drop of blood in my veins to serve you, dear lady, and I repeat it to-night. Henceforth you are free, for I left Murad Bey dead on the battle-field. He charged upon me with frantic fierceness, and after a short conflict, fell. His loss carried confusion into the ranks of the Mamelukes, and they retreated in wild disorder, leaving us masters of their camp and city; even your guard fled at our cheers of 'Victoire!'"

He paused, and then continued, casting a keen glance around him:

"Your Mameluke lover must be a perfect Crusader, for he has a regal home, and when I entered I wondered why its magnificence has not dazzled you, and made you accept the Bey."

"Sir stranger, you shall see how I value these baubles he has heaped upon me—look!"

Rising from her seat, she hurried to the window, and taking off her rings and bracelets, flung them down into the court-yard, adding:

"Daily, since my stay at the palace, I have thrown his hated gifts to the pavement beneath; and the next morning my waiting-woman was sure to replace them. They have brought me fruits, flowers and wine, but I would not touch them; only a few drops of water have passed my lips during the four days of my imprisonment."

"Brave girl!" cried Arnaud; "you are worthy to wear the cross and star of the Legion of Honour! But it is high time you should use the freedom which we have restored you; come forth with me into the garden, for you have nothing to fear, and I am yearning to give you a glimpse of my heart."

Zoe's cheek flushed, and taking his proffered arm, she passed through the galleries leading to her chamber, and descended the staircase, nor did they pause till they gained the gardens, where she had seen her captor pacing, tall, grim, and immovable as the stone sphinx. How shall I paint that garden where eternal summer seemed to reign? with its royal palms, towering tamarisks, and pomegranate and orange-trees, heavy with bloom—its wealth of roses of every hue, from the softest flush to a deep crimson; its lotus flowers and rare lilies, rising here and there like a pale ventail, bearing a pure essence of perfume; its fountains catching the moonlight in their spray; its still pools, by which the Ibis slept, its Turkish pavilions, its mimic pagodas, and the fairy-like caques moored here and there along the banks of the artificial streams.

For a few moments she walked on in silence, but at length the girl murmured, while tears of joy gushed into her lustrous eyes:

"It is sweet to be free!"

"As to me there could not have been a pleasanter deed than to save you, lady."

"But, monsieur, before you leave me to-night, I have a favour to crave, and I scarcely know how to ask it."

"Parbleau! What can it be?"

"Restore me the ring I was obliged to send you

in order to secure my safety;" and she extended her little hand, not, however, daring to meet his gaze.

"Zoe, dear Zoe, if I could believe that you would learn to value it for the giver's sake I would not exchange places with any man who walks the earth."

The maiden did not speak, and he went on, as he sank at her feet.

"Here I kneel at the confessional, and you shall be my confessor: Till I saw you, I laughed when my comrades talked of love at first sight; but then, my whole soul was revolutionised—I felt that I had met my life's good genius; and when I rescued you from the Mameluke warriors and parted with you soon afterward, it cost me a keen pang to leave you. That night, when the camp fire burned low, and our men, with the exception of the guard and Bonaparte, I sat in my tent penning a brief record in the little diary I always carried about me."

Again he stopped, and his manly face grew still more earnest as he resumed:

"Zoe, from the hour of our meeting at the memorable harvest of roses, you've been the star of my destiny, following me up the Nile and over the desert; I love you as no man ever loved before, I am certain—as I never dreamed I should be capable of loving. Do you return it, Zoe—do you care for the ring because it is associated with memories of me, or as a pledge that can insure your personal safety?"

"For your sake," was the low reply.

"A thousand blessings on you!" exclaimed the young man, fervently. "Heaven can bring no greater happiness in life than to have that assurance from your lips."

As he spoke, he drew her towards him. His lips quivered on her brow, and the next moment the family ring of the Arnauds was restored to its place, and the young officer murmured, in a voice rich and musical with tenderness:

"Let it be henceforth a seal of our betrothal, and may it never be removed till it is exchanged for a wedding-ring."

Thus their troth-plight was given.

At length they parted; a French guard was stationed around the palace of the missing Mameluke, and every precaution taken to hold the city.

In the still watches of the night, Zoe awoke from the first slumber she had enjoyed since her capture; what sent a richer carnation to her cheek, and made her eyes dance with joy?

Warding up through blossoming thickets, and the rose trained over the lattice,

Springing from the couch, Zoe wrapped a rich cashmere shawl about her, and listened till the last faint thrill had melted away, and then a spray of orange blossoms rewarded the singer.

While their cup of bliss was mantling high, Jean Duchene, the officer to whom I have before alluded, was plotting to dash it from their lips.

He had followed Arnaud to the palace, and had watched and listened in the gardens till his rage knew no bounds.

"Betrothed to her!" he sneered, as they disappeared. "Pauline's love to be thrown away for an unknown girl like that, who would disgrace the proud blood of the Arnauds; but it will go hard if I cannot thwart them! Murad Bey has already been restored to consciousness by his friends, who were removing him for burial, and I will see that he again secures his prize."

CHAPTER IV.

THE Chateau Duchene was one of the finest old family seats in the province, where it was situated, and had more than once been sketched by travelling artists in search of the beautiful and picturesque. It was built of grey stone, and in the Gothic style of architecture, and superbly crowned the hill on which it stood, commanding the magnificent view from its high turrets and battlements.

The broad park swept from the chateau even to the banks of a river immortalised in Byron's Childe Harold; nothing could have been lovelier or more romantic than its clumps of grand old trees, haunted by the birds of France, its sunny glades, its fairy-like summer-houses, and the lake, of which the eye could catch the sudden glimpses through the foliage, with the white swans dipping their snowy breasts in the blue waters.

Within the chateau was not less imposing than without; the hall was panelled with oak, carved as only French artisans can, and hung with branching antlers and suits of armour; and the drawing-rooms and chambers, furnished with the cumbrous splendor, which marked the time of Louis Quatorze; but the rooms appropriated to Pauline, the only daughter and the pride of the family, looked as if the marvels of

more modern art had been carefully gathered there. No tapestry draped the walls, no thick curtains swept over the windows and the antique bedsteads; no ponderous chairs and sofas were to be seen in her especial dominions—all was light, airy, graceful, and the luxuries of her apartment told that every wish had been gratified.

It was on a September morning, that the Contesse Pauline sat in her dressing-room, leaning back against the cushions of her easy-chair, like some idle queen, gazing at her princely heritage.

She wore a blue brocade negligee, secured at the waist by a heavy girdle, which her brother had sent her from the East by a courier, who had been despatched to France soon after the taking of Alexandria.

Her hair was carelessly gathered into a loose silken fillet, and her daintily shodded feet rested on a rich cushion, while her hands were indolently folded.

Pauline Duchene was undeniably a beauty and a belle; but her loveliness was of far different type from that of the bewildering Zoë.

She was tall, graceful, stately; with a fair complexion, large blue eyes, and a wealth of golden hair.

In fact, she was just the woman to wear nodding plumes, or the head-gear of puffs and curls, which lent the ladies of that period such a stately aspect.

The expression of her face bespoke pride and ambition, and there was lines about the small and exquisitely chiselled mouth, that would have told a physiognomist my Lady Pauline was not without a strong will.

While she was sitting thus, her pretty grisette had been impatiently watching her mistress, and arranging and re-arranging the boxes, brushes and jewel-casket, with which the dressing-table was strewn. At length she approached the lady and said, pointing at the clock:

"Viola, it is already late, and the count will fret if the dinner is not served at the usual hour. Will it please you to make your toilette?"

"Indeed, it seems scarcely worth the time it takes now," observed Pauline.

"Ah! ma'amelle, you think there is nobody to dress for, since young Count Arnaud went away."

"No, no—one only meets a few old gentlemen and dowagers, and as for me, I never care how I look."

The grisette laughed and murmured:

"What a fine thing it must be to have a lover like Claude Arnaud—so handsome, so noble, so brave—even now they begin to call him the pride of the Legion. Parbleu! I do not wonder life does not seem the same when he is gone!"

Pauline smiled sadly, but the artful grisette had intended to gain the position of confidante, she was foiled this time, for her mistress replied:

"Hush! hush! do not gossip on my affairs de cœur—it is as much as you can attend to, Jocinthe to manage the endless flirtations, in which your pretty face involve you. To be sure, when weary leagues from Paris, and with no young gentlemen to admire, there is not much inducement to make a grand toilette; but for my father's sake, I will dress so as not to disgrace his table, and the place I hold as hostess to what few guests may chance to be present."

With these words she rose and swept to the dressing-table, and in a few moments her toilette had been completed.

As she rose to her full height and cast a single glance to the long mirror opposite, any body must have acknowledged her a magnificent woman; the features were faultless, and the faintest possible bloom—a flush scarcely deeper than that which glows in the opal, tinged her cheek; but her face lacked the thousand varying expressions, the vivid lights and shadows, which lent Zoë her chief charm.

When she had taken a brief survey of her azure robe and the pearls twisted amid her hair, she dismissed the grisette, and, closing and locking the door, began to pace the room.

"Ah!" she muttered, "If Claude Arnaud were an avowed lover, I should not be a little proud to confess it; but, strange, strange, he left me without a declaration. He was here, too, for a week previous to his departure with Jean, his comrade in arms and brother officer, and yet, though I employed every art in my power, I could not bring him to my feet."

She paused an instant, and then resumed, speaking slowly and bitterly:

"Jean told me he would assuredly write what, perhaps, he had not dared to speak while in France. But months dragged by, and no letter has reached me. Hark! what is that?"

As she spoke, she hurried to the window. Brisot, the steward, was riding up the avenue with a package

of letters, and her cheek burned and eyes flashed as she flew to meet him in the hall.

"Is there not a letter for me, good Brisot?" she asked, hastily.

"Yes; my master will assort them, as is his custom, and give you your share." And the steward, who was punctilious in all matters of etiquette, walked into the saloon, where the Count Duchene sat awaiting dinner.

Laying the letters on the table, he withdrew, and Pauline bent over her father, trembling in every limb.

The count, having assorted the letters, passed one over to his daughter, who eagerly took it and hastened to read the contents.

The letter was from her brother Jean. Alluding to Claude and Zoë, he said:

"He first saw her the day we landed, and while we were on our march to Alexandria, she, with some of her fellow-servants, was harvesting roses, and Claude was dazzled at once. It must be confessed she is wondrously beautiful, but no match for an Arnaud, and so I told him when he betrayed such a sudden penchant for her. When I first wrote you after the siege of Alexandria, I had hoped that he would forget her, but circumstances have combined to increase rather than diminish his interest, as you will soon see.

"While we were within an earshot of the rose-gardens, shrieks startled us, and it proved that the girl had been born away by a Mameluke lover. Claude set off in pursuit, rescued her from the warrior, and brought her back in triumph. Of course there must have been a most favourable opportunity for an acquaintance, and when they parted he gave her his seal ring—something as Queen Elizabeth did the ring of three diamonds to the Earl of Essex, and with a similar promise—that if she should need protection during our campaign this keepsake should secure it at his hands."

Angry tears fell upon the sheet and blinded the reader's eyes, but she scornfully dashed them away, and continued the perusal.

"When we were on our march up the Nile to Cairo, the Mameluke warrior reappeared with several of his followers, and during the battle of the Pyramids I heard him assure Claude the girl was again in his power; but when the besieged town had surrendered and the foe fled or fallen on the field, this artful girl was the means of bringing him into a most romantic adventure.

"The warrior from whom Claude had snatched her the day of the rose harvest was no less a personage than Murad Bey, and he owned a splendid palace in Cairo. Zoë had been held a captive there, and when the city was surrendered to the French, she feared it might be given up to plunder like Alexandria.

"She therefore sent a slave belonging to the Bey to our quarters with the ring that had been a pledge of protection from Claude. It was given and a message delivered to our dragoman, and he brought the servant in. I happened to see and hear what was passing, and followed my comrade to the palace, lingering about the grounds till he came forth with the lady on his arm. I overheard the conversation which ensued, and when they parted they were betrothed lovers.

"Oh! Pauline, Pauline, this will be a great blow to you, but I have thought it would fail less heavily on you, ma chère, should I disclose it than if a stranger lips breathed it in your ear. It is the theme for camp-gossip, and he doubtless intends to bring her back to France his bride, or have the rites solemnised on reaching Paris. But I will foil him, I have sworn it."

"The Mameluke Bey, whom he thought dead on the field, has been resuscitated by his friends, and in due time he shall know that Zoë is not yet lost to him. Courage, courage, ma sœur, all will yet be well: Zoë once beyond Claude Arnaud's reach, and his heart will soon return to you, and I trust I shall yet stand groomsman at your wedding."

"It may require years to accomplish my purpose, but, Pauline, wait, watch and hope. Adieu, adieu, the morsing is breaking, and there is a busy day before the grand army, for we cannot rest on our well-earned laurels."

As she concluded her brother's letter, Pauline sank down, and pressed her face against the rich blossoms of the carpet in a wild paroxysm of grief. Disappointed love and wounded pride were struggling for the mastery, and never in her whole life had she been so miserable.

That was her first great sorrow, and as its waves surged over her, it seemed for a time as if her heart were wrecked amid the storm.

From her childhood Claude Arnaud had been the realisation of her ideal; and when he had fought side by side with her brother, and returned to his native

provinces before setting out on the Egyptian campaign, her girlish interest deepened into a woman's love.

As she reflected on her brother's letter, she sprang to her feet, and again dashed away her tears, as if the weakness had been a disgrace.

Her cheeks burned now, her blue eyes glittered, and her voice had a strange sarcastic tone, when she muttered:

"Ah! I see the snare into which Claude has fallen; he is chivalrous and brave, and she has enlisted his sympathies, but when they are effectually separated, and he returns to France, he will blush at his absurd fancy, and I am certain it will not require years to obliterate her memory; I will wait and hope, and trust Jean's next letter will assure me that she is safe under the protection of her Mameluke lover."

While these events were transpiring in France, the grand army were prosecuting their victorious march through Egypt, and Murad Bey lay a helpless sufferer in a residence, to which he had been removed after the battle of the Pyramids. The dwelling he now occupied was not so luxurious as his home in Cairo, but was nevertheless fitted up with oriental splendour.

One evening a tall figure, wearing a loose flowing robe, and luxuriant white beard and hair, asked admission to the gate-way, where a sentinel stood scimitar in hand.

"Friend," he said, saluting the guard with an eastern salam, "I would fain have speech with your master."

"Murad Bey is ill—he sees no one except the priest and physicians."

"I am a physician, endowed from my youth with miraculous powers of healing, and I have come to offer my services—come from a long distance, sir sentinel."

The guard parleyed with him a few moments, and then consented to admit him.

The stranger took his way through the courtyard, and having gained the hall within, was conducted to the chamber where the Mameluke was lying, flushed and restless with fever.

A small table stood near the bedside, laden with flasks and drinking-cups, and the leaves of some healing plant were burning in a silver brazier, filling the air with a sweet, balasmic odour.

There were several slaves in attendance; but when the stranger approached the sufferer they made way for him and retired from the room.

Murad Bey inquired from whence he came; but the stranger simply bent low over him, and whispered:

"I fancy your mind is diseased as well as your body."

"Yes, yes, there is no denying it; these accursed invaders have humbled us in the dust—wherever Sultan Kebir moves, he carries conquest with him. But restore me to myself and name your own reward."

"And has no other shadow fallen upon you?" asked the pretended physician—"Oh! Murad Bey, you have been crossed in love."

"Stranger, you must be a prophet—you have spoken the truth! I love Zoë, who may fitly be called the Queen of the East, with my whole soul, and a young Frenchman has twice snatched her from me. I fancied I had her safe in my own palace; but after the disasters of Cairo, I understand he made love to her in my grounds. Mayhap she is now his wife, and ready to follow him to the world's end!"

"Nay, nay, not so; you may foil them yet with a vengeance of which they do not dream, for they believe you have been entombed in your family mausoleum."

The Bey started, and for the first time since his illness, raised his head from the pillow without assistance.

"Aye, say you so?" he cried. "That thought is enough to give me new life; but I had forgotten—" a cloud again settled on his proud, dark face—"I must lie here nobody knows how long."

"I see nothing why you may not recover in a week so as to mount your charger, and return to your old habita."

"Stranger," continued the Mameluke, "I repeat my promise; restore me in seven days, and you shall have a princely reward."

HARD STUDY.—Hard study does not of itself shorten life, but does of itself tend to increase the longevity of man. When hard students die early, it may be found that in some way they have fallen into the habit of violating some of the laws of nature, or began study with some inherited infirmity. The pursuit of truth is pleasurable; it is exhilarating; it is exalting, and promotes serenity. Of all men,

natural philosophers average the longest lives. The great, the governing reason is, in addition to the above, that their attention is drawn away from the indulgence of animal appetites; their gratifications are not in that direction; hence, they are neither gourmands, drunkards, nor licentious.

WEALTHY BEGGARS.

THE seeming paradox of our title is one that every newspaper reader will construe aright. A child would define a beggar as "a poor man in the streets," and such he is generally supposed to be—one who seeks the monetary aid of passers-by in order to get food and alleviate his condition of distressed poverty; but in this sense to apply the appellation of "Beggar" to the majority of woe-begone and threadbare beings who parade our thoroughfares is more than a misnomer—it is a sympathetic distinction most undeservedly applied.

It is not probable, however, that they themselves will quarrel with the term, notwithstanding that it is the very lowest grade in the descending social scale which we distinguish by a name; for in truth their title, in conjunction with the crafty arrangement of their intentionally scanty clothing, which produces such marked effect upon our compassionate sensibilities, forms their stock in trade. To designate them anything but "Beggars" would be to reduce their working capital simply to the outward accessories of their wonderfully artistic study of facial unhappiness.

It is no intention of ours to despise that poverty which honourably belongs to the being whom fortune has deserted and reduced from easy competency to a condition of abject indigence. Such cases command themselves to our most sincere sympathies, and we conceive that we render them a service by directing attention to that tribe of vagrants who employ the garb of poverty to their own fraudulent ends, making street almsgiving an uncertain and most probably a misapplied act of benevolence, and bringing the general custom into such disrepute that the few worthy supplicants are looked upon with equal suspicion, and genuine appeals often go unheeded.

In fact, indiscriminate almsgiving is the parent of mendicity.

No one would desire to breathe other than a warm, vitalising breath upon the promptings of charity, that it might spread its blessed influence in every fold; but the knowledge that so many impostors thrive upon the bounty of the benevolent compels us to urge the utmost discrimination in every case.

This species of rascality is usually deemed to be confined to those who are void of all wealth, save in a keen perception for turning poverty to good account, which in another sphere would be considered a remarkable quality, insomuch as no one can use fortune and misfortune with equal facility or boast of talents of no mean order; but we find beggars frequently possess considerable means, either gained prior to entering upon their vagrancy—so that the piecemeal want is from the outset unfounded—or more frequently it is the reward of beggarly success.

Nor are the offenders solely to be found among the plebeian section; as men of good birth are at times discovered in the ranks of the vagabond fraternity; the infusion of their superior influence, however, not being potent enough to elevate the art of mendicancy. Of the latter type we may venture an opinion that the world will not again produce so notorious and extraordinary a character as Bampfylde Moore Carew, the off-spring of an ancient and honourable house, whose varied professional skill and cosmopolitan degradations earned for him the exalted title of the "Beggar King"; but it is not difficult to find many lesser lights, who only give place to this distinguished star in the degree of their knavery and impudence. It would be impossible to be guided by any rule in discovering where the suppliant honestly pleads for relief; for the artifices of the professed beggar are so fertile, their garb more fickle than fashion, their studied action and language so plausible and guarded, and the astuteunning of their whole plan so complete, that they become difficult of detection.

We lately had occasion to test the veracity of a woman having all the outward form of quiet, reduced respectability, who tearfully pleaded for the means to bury her "poor child," to save the indignities of parochial interference. Our journey with the distracted parent led us to a decent abode where we observed the woman—who had gone forward—hurriedly pull down the blind, the token of death within, but met us at the door with an apology that the key of the room where the corpse lay could not be found. Fraud naturally presented itself to our mind; but, acknowledging the dilemma, we promised another visit to assure ourselves, and passed out, casually inquiring of her neighbour if she knew

the lad in question. The imposture was at once proved by pointing out the young urchin among half a dozen others cowering in the gutter, his bright little face dispelling the pallor of death with which we had already associated him.

To-day the capricious fancy of the beggar will cause him to don the sombre dignity of a shabby clerical costume, and introducing himself at your door with the most modest of raps, plead with canting hypocrisy for your "kind Christian assistance to enable him to ameliorate the sad condition of the poor and needy of the "district," which "district" comprises his solitary and estimable himself, and your benevolence is applied accordingly.

Another guise is that of reduced gentility. Exquisite cleanliness is here indispensable, and the faded aristocratic apparel—a bargain from a wardrobe dealer's—in so brushed that the rust of time almost disappears, and it fairly polishes, closely competing with the greasy gloss of his hat. Headless of his peeping finger-tops, which are still in keeping with his "ont-at-elbows" character, he also relies upon his gloves for further effect, as no "gentleman" issues forth without these unmistakeable signs.

This "gentleman" will at once open fire upon you with a series of doleful jeremiads, and after indulging in a little family pride, with suggestive side-hints about those shadowy things of the past—his fortune and estates—he will inveigh at the cruelty of fate that compels him to suffer the ignominy of asking a favour, and so on, the finale being a request for the loan of a florin, or more, according to his extremity.

These impostors are two of the superior type of beggars.

Others innumerable trust solely to working upon the tender feelings of the people. The easily acquired and crass deception of being lame, halt, or blind, is one of the most lazy and remunerative emoluments of the beggar's skill.

The hearts of most of us open wide to benevolence when we look upon a deformed fellow-creature; but there are pseudo-cripples in abundance, who elicit that charity which we naturally accord to the physically malformed sufferer.

We are apt to look upon a crutch as necessarily supporting a crippled form; but this is superficial and unsafe reasoning, and reminds us of the acute observation of the Chinaman, who having been landed by a boatman rejoicing in the honour of a timber toe, which he planted in the water, was immediately impressed with the fact that all wooden-legged Englishmen were reserved for watermen. Wooden legs do not constitute watermen, nor crutches lame men.

Recently we have seen that one enterprising would-be dumb impostor conceived the idea of exhibiting his tongue as proof positive of sincerity; but unfortunately for him the police authorities had carefully preserved in spirits three other tongues that had belonged to this ingenious individual in former days.

They certainly belonged to him; but we do not mean to infer that nature had lavished upon him a plurality of tongues, for he had merely obtained them from the guileless sheep.

Many, under the pretence of vending wares, will make that a cover for their "real occupation" matches, buttons, lace, and such, forming the cloak.

Especially should we avoid a gang of dissipated women, each with a squalling infant in one arm and a few worthless and faded flowers in the vacant hand, importune pedestrians for money in a tone that is positively sickening in its hypocritical whine. A non-compliance with their demands will unmuske them, for they resort to the sweetness of their natural voice to curse you in execrable language, as being most suited to give effect to their vile utterances.

"I am starving" placarded in front is frequently resorted to as an irresistible appeal; but this statement will not harmonise with the fact that bread and meat may be frequently seen stowed away in odd corners, untouched and not wanted. In fact, food, the ostensible craving, is actually despised, and would at any time be exchanged for beer and tobacco.

The money that these beings obtain is surprising; and when the wealth of one more saving than the rest is discovered secreted in the most unlikely of nooks, we are fairly astonished, and to-morrow throw a penny to the first beggar that bares us, and thus charity helps to support itself.

It is not the most solitary of occurrences that a beggar, after his demise, has been found to have become possessed of house property of good value from the proceeds of mendicancy; and we find that among other things it provided him with the capital to carry on the nefarious money-lending extortion and when sentenced to a just punishment, his all

absorbing concern was for the interest on his advances.

The beggar tribes are also perfectly known to each other, and their plans, reduced to a simple system, recognised throughout. Information is imparted to their own kind with the regularity and accuracy of commercial business, and hence benevolently-disposed individuals periodically wait on one another.

These oft-recurring deceptions operate with a paralysing force upon charitable spirits, and tend much to deter acts of benevolence. To assume a rigid indifference to all appeals seems but the natural result of being duped by lazy, worthless beggars who prowl about our streets, and obtain alms that are wholly undeserved.

PUBLIC AMUSEMENTS.

THE DRAMA.

STANDARD.

MESSRS. DOUGLASS never omit, at whatever cost, to score every drama, actor, and good thing in the way of theatricals, and hardly novelty which the West End may produce for the delectation and delight of their West End patrons. The "Colless Dawn" has been transplanted last week, with the farce of "Barney the Baron" as a wind-up. "The Octocean" and "The Irish Tutor" have been also played. On the 21st Tom Taylor's effective play "Twist Ax and Crown" was presented, with Mrs. Rosaby as the Princess Elizabeth, a character which the lady has made her own. Then a new drama, avowedly taken from the French, an honest confession, often omitted at West End houses, it is called the "Secret of Reckoning." But these are not all. "The Shaughraun" is to renew its Old Drury run, and "All for Her" follows it in due course. Here's dramatic pavilion, surely to last Messrs. Douglass' habitudes till Christmas brings Jack Frost and the pantomime.

ADELPHI.

BOUCICAULT'S intensely Irish drama "Arran na Pogue" has been the revival here, and is very likely to keep its place on the bills until the close of the dramatic interregnum brings back the spectators and tourists to town. "Arran na Pogue" has all the qualities of a stock-piece in its peasant class. The interest is strong and sustained, and the incidents skilfully interwoven. This is not wasted by speeches and episodes that too often do not help on the story. There is nothing discursive in the plot, whatever of wildness there may be in some of the characters and their speeches. Matter of fact occurrences are worked up and invested with a poetic and picturesque garnish that seems both natural and becoming. The actors, too, at the Adelphi are at home at this sort of play. Mr. J. G. Williamson's "Shaun" is in every model performance, but in "looking to avoid imitation" of his predecessor it occasionally lacks breadth and robustness in his fun. Miss Maggie Moore sang the well-known song "The Weaving of the Green" with such pathos and feeling as bring down warm applause. Perhaps the most genuine success was Mr. Shiel Barry's Michael Deasy, which deserves the credit of one of the very best assumptions of the character we have yet seen. Mr. S. Emery (Colonel O'Grady), Mr. W. Terrell (Basilisk McOul), Mr. J. G. Shore (Major Coffin), and Miss Hudspeth (Fanny Power) deserve a compliment. The turbulent and excitable Irish auditory in the trial scene were amusingly animated, and Mr. Barry's part of it was skilfully effective. The final tableau of Shaun's climbing the tower, and the change of scene to moonlight and the rocky sea-coast, was a triumph of stage management and machinery. A comedy bearing the title of "Orson," from the pen of Mr. H. F. Grattan, was the vehicle for bringing before the public two very clever little children of the well-known author. Master H. and Miss E. Grattan show a remarkable aptitude for "study," and almost a painful precision in the delivery of their set sentences: they also dance a minuet with a ceremonial formality that would do honour to a French aristocrat and aristocrat of the Court of Louis XV., or the Grand Monarque. The piece is neatly written. Miss Edith Stark plays the widowed mother of the two pretentious and somewhat pedantic children; and Mr. McElroy enacts for his husband's father, an old French marshal, who comes down to the chateau of his dead son with the intention of turning out Madame Legrand and her two children. Madame Legrand's vivacity, combined with her meekness and dignity, and the irresistible grace of the two extra goody-goody children, conquer the stern old soldier, and he piti-

tions to make one of the family; and so, pathetically ends the piece. The performance began by another guess word of piece, the well-known farce of "That Blessed Baby."

GRECIAN.

"NAME ON NOTHING," the latest production of Messrs. Conquest and Pettitt, is running a course of success. The story is of the time of the Crimean war, and is full of incident, comic and sensational, and capital situations. The rascally Grenouille, whose wicked activity pervades the piece, was especially presented by Mr. Conquest himself, and his partner-in-villany well played by Mr. Nicholls, Miss Devlin, Miss Miller, and Miss Victoria lent their aid to make the drama a great hit.

THE BRITANNIA.

"FAISSEY ACCUSED," a new drama by Mr. Griffiths, is the piece de resistance at Mrs. Lane's theatre. Its scene is laid in France, and it has many of the sensational elements so well known to the auditoriums across the Channel. Mr. Bigwood, as a barber, created much fun, as a relief to the more serious and villainous portions of the play, which in parts called for the pruning-knife, which we are happy to say has been judiciously applied in later representations of the piece. A thoroughly Irish piece with the thoroughly Irish name "Gra-Gral-Machree" is also running here. It is full of plots, hairbreadth escapes, and other Bonapartist surprises, so that it keeps the interest of the audience alive from the rise of the curtain to the going down thereof.

As there has been nothing now at the larger houses, we have nothing to note of their doings. At Covent Garden the Promenade Concerts, conducted by Signor Arditi, are in full swing.—At the Haymarket, with the intercession of an excellent representation of "The School for Scandal" for the benefit of Mr. Walter, they persevere with "Easy Shaving" and "London Assurance."—At the Alhambra they nightly take "Le Voyage dans la Lune," with Offenbach's lively accompaniment.—At the Criterion "The Great Divorce Case" is yet on, outliving even the Balham Mystery, and is relieved by the nightly disclosures of "Mary's Secret."—At the Marylebone they have been doing business with "The Waterress Girl" and "The Black Mantle."

MISS EMILY FOWLER (Mrs. Pemberton) and Miss Leighton are engaged at the QUEEN'S, and will play in "Henry V." Shakespeare is to be made eminently spectacular, and a couple of ballets, entitled "The Falcon Chase" and "The Twelve Angels," are particularised. We shall anon have "Mysteries and Miracles" in the olden "Coventry plays."

MISS MARIE WILTON will re-open the PRINCE OF WALES'S THEATRE in October.

"ALL FOR HER," which has replaced Tools and his broad farce at the GAIETY, is surely too serious a play for a temperature of 85° in the shade. Mr. John Clayton's "Hugh Trevor," however, produced a powerful effect. The piece, however, must be withdrawn this week, owing to Mr. Clayton's other engagements.

MRS. STRATHMORE'S RECEPTION.

MRS. STRATHMORE sat in her elegant drawing-room, anxiously watching the operations of the upholsterers who were hanging her new curtains, while her daughter Ida, who, apparently, had little interest in draperies or upholstery, walked up and down the long apartment, repeating to herself, in tones exceptionally low and musical, "The Rhyme of the Duchess May."

A singular daughter to belong to such a mother. Mrs. Strathmore was tall and dark, with the remains of great beauty in her now somewhat wrinkled and careworn face.

Her dress was a simple morning negligee, if any thing which Mrs. Strathmore wore could be called simple.

It had been made in Paris, and was to the last degree stylish.

The lace at her throat and wrists were of rare fineness and delicacy—her jewellery antique and costly; yet the whole was worn with an air that convinced you that it was only negligee, after all, and you felt at once that Mrs. Strathmore was very blasé of the world.

Ida Strathmore, on the contrary, was a fresh and handsome blonde of twenty. Her face, besides being beautiful, was full of enthusiasm, and from her deep violet blue eyes welled up a constant glow and sparkle of pure feeling, which made the strongest

possible contrast to her mamma's cynical, world-weary face.

"I think, Ida," said Mrs. Strathmore, "that gold colour is just the proper thing for these rooms. That tawny shade, too, is really something almost new. If the lace had been a shade finer I should have been better pleased; but, really, one must economise somewhere, and not a half-dozen of the people who visit us will ever know the difference."

"Yes, mamma," said Ida, and went on with her recitation:

"The little birds sang east, the little birds
sang west,
Toll slowly, toll slowly."

"Ida, child, do stop this fearful monotonous. What anybody can see to delight them in a graveyard I cannot imagine. I want to have a serious talk with you, child. Come, sit on this ottoman for an instant."

Ida ceased her chanting, and obeyed her mother's mandate.

"Well, mamma?" said Ida, waiting.

"It is quite time, my child, that you began to take more serious views of life. This reckless life in which you have been indulged, and all the gay, free views of poetry and the like, are well enough for the years that are past. They have served to keep your face fresh, your eyes bright, and your manner genteel. That is a good beginning. Be sure, child, I do not mean to censure the plans of those who have had charge of you. But what remains is to see you properly established in life. Perhaps it was not to be supposed that, with your previous training, you should take at once to the ways of the world; though I confess I was disappointed that poor Scarborough seemed so utterly thrown away upon you."

"Why, mamma," said Ida, "I am sure I thought Scarborough delightful. So many of the girls I saw there seemed almost weary and maxious, but I was as happy as a bird from morning till night."

"Precisely," said Mrs. Strathmore, with a look of wisdom. "But these same weary, anxious-looking girls were passing their fortunes by day and by night, and so relieving their mothers of care, while you thought only of enjoying yourself, and had no idea of availing yourself of your advantages. That was the difference."

It was said with an injured air, as though Mrs. Strathmore felt that somehow her daughter's behaviour had indicated gross heartlessness and want of consideration.

Ida blushed rather painfully.

"Why, mamma," she said, "what more could I have done? I wore the dresses you provided—and very beautiful dresses they were, and I enjoyed them immensely—and I went where you desired and with whom you desired; and if nothing came of it, I really can't think I was exactly to blame. You would not have had me make downright love to the gentlemen, would you?"

"Of course not, silly child. But, Ida, your heart was not in the work; and you did not use your charms for you are beautiful—to any sort of advantage. Now, there was Howard Feisenthal—I am sure he was attracted. And such a part as he is! I don't see how you could have let him slip through your fingers!"

Ida blushed again, but this time with a different meaning:

"And there was Mr. Granger."

"Don't mention him," said Ida. "He was old and gross. If he admired me, it was as he would have admired a wax doll, because of my complexion and my dress."

"But, Ida, he is very wealthy, and, to be very plain with you, child, you must be married. Hitherto I have tried to spare you anxiety, partly because you are my daughter, and I would like even at this late day to do a mother's duty by you. And partly, also, I confess, because care and anxiety do so rob a fresh face like yours of its charms. But the truth is, my daughter, I am bankrupt. Your father, you well know, left you no fortune. My own is well-nigh spent. What we do must be done quickly. If by spring you are not engaged, I know not what we shall do. A paltry one thousand pounds in all I have left. You see, child, the case is desperate. You must marry. Don't look so frightened. It will not be difficult, with your face and manners, to manage the thing, but it will not do to be either indifferent or over-scrupulous."

"Why, mamma?" said Ida, with a scared look. "If this is so, why are we living in this expensive style, ordering new curtains and giving great parties? One thousand pounds is quite a little fortune in the country. We might go there and take a little house, and I would teach school, and we would live simply, and I think we could be very happy."

Mrs. Strathmore's countenance assumed an expression of despair mingled with indignation—virtuous indignation.

"What nonsense!" she exclaimed. "Why, Ida, how could even your father have suffered you to be imbued with such vulgar notions? It might, I suppose, be possible for you to vegetate in some such tiresome and unheard-of way as that; but, once for all, that I should think of such a thing is preposterous. No; there is but one way out of our difficulties, and that lies through a prosperous marriage."

"Well, mamma," said Ida, coldly, for she was not yet quite wax in her mother's hands, "why do you not quite wax in her mother's hands, 'why do you not get married yourself?'

Mrs. Strathmore raised her eyebrows. She was not ill pleased with the suggestion; for she was not witty enough to see the irony that lurked beneath it.

"My daughter," she said, solemnly, "I am a mother. Of course it is your interests which are paramount with me. If you were married, it might not be impossible for me to renew my youth. Many women older and with fewer advantages than I have married and done well. But you see, my child, your prospects must be considered first. When you are well settled, it will be possible for me to think of myself. And now, my dear, what will you wear at the party?"

Ida had flamed out all her impudent satire in that one wicked suggestion, which, after all, had been wasted upon her mother. To this query, therefore, she simply replied, "Nothing."

"It is immaterial. Whatever you please."

Mrs. Strathmore bit her lips.

"I have a piece of news for you," she said merrily. "Howard Feisenthal has not gone abroad after all. I saw him yesterday. He changed his place at the last moment, and he will be at your party."

"Indeed?" said Ida, with the same still manner; but Mrs. Strathmore, who possessed a quick eye, saw that the tell-tale colour was a wary line up to her brow.

"Yes; and I advise you to think about your costume, and be prepared to tell me at least what you have decided upon. I am going to see about my own now, but to-morrow will do for you. I hope you will not desire new ornaments, for I really could hardly manage them, and I have half a dozen pretty sets that have not worn here; but except that I give you carte blanche, with only the injunction to consult your style, and be sure that you fit upon something very striking and very becoming."

And Mrs. Strathmore, who was satisfied that she had made an impression upon her daughter, rose languidly from the sofa, and went upstairs to don her street costume, leaving Ida still apparently lost in thought.

Mrs. Strathmore had been an heiress, and had married in her youth a man every way suited to her.

Evan Strathmore had surprised all his friends by his silence.

Himself of good family and a moderate estate, he might have chosen whom he liked: and certainly those who knew his sound judgment and strict integrity and fastidious tastes, had reason to be surprised when they heard of his engagement to Hortense Eldon, a girl of immature years, and the heiress of a fortune won by questionable means.

But Miss Eldon was very beautiful and very fascinating, and many another as strong and discriminating as Evan Strathmore has been bewildered by these external charms.

One child, Ida, was born to them, and then the indiscretion of Mrs. Strathmore furnished ample grounds for divorce, which was, however, out of consideration for Ida, granted for the cause of incompatibility of temper; but Evan Strathmore had no difficulty in retaining the guardianship of his child.

Mrs. Strathmore went abroad, and had spent most of her time for ten years upon the Continent.

Wearied at last by her homeless and aimless wanderings, she had returned to her own country just as her former husband, who had spent a secluded and in some sense unsuccessful life, died, leaving the child Ida penniless, and through the demise of Miss Strathmore, the aunt who had had charge of her, friendless.

Mrs. Strathmore claimed her child, and Ida, won by her elegant appearance and the show of affection lavished upon her, and following also the natural instincts of the daughter's heart towards the mother—instincts which Evan Strathmore had never had the heart to tamper with—gladly gave herself up to her mother's care and guidance.

It would perhaps be a useless task to attempt to analyse Mrs. Strathmore's motives in thus reclaiming her child; to try to say just in what proportion they were compounded of natural affection, pride in her daughter's beauty, the craving for a new sensation, and deeper than all, the rather shrewd belief that Ida's personal charms might prove the winning card in the desperate game which she was playing against



[A CHARMING HOSTESS.]

fate. What is certain is that Ida had hitherto found her a gentle and indulgent mother, and, though she had been often surprised and more than once shocked at the maxims of worldly wisdom which had fallen from her lips, yet on the whole she had managed to retain for her some portion of the respect and affection due from a daughter to her mother.

Her summer at Scarborough had been, as she had declared, a season of unalloyed delight; or at least the sole distraction from it had been the rather apparent eagerness with which her mother had forced her upon the matrimonial market. Still, so skilfully had Mrs. Strathmore manoeuvred, that Ida had not always been aware of her motive, and so had suffered far less than she might otherwise have done.

But since their return to town the pressure brought to bear upon her had been more perceptible, and Ida, who was a girl of sterling sense and worth, found her position growing insupportable, when, upon the morning referred to, the crisis had arrived.

Her reflections during the hour after Mrs. Strathmore had left her we shall not attempt to follow in detail.

A few points only were clear to herself from amid the confused mass of her ideas.

First, that there was no honourable way of escape from her mother's guardianship, and that therefore whatever fate had in store for the one must be shared by the other.

Second, that come what might, she would never contract a mercenary marriage.

Third, a little resolve concerning Howard Felsenthal, which she hardly confessed to herself.

A fourth, a determination to make the best of a bad situation, and, while preserving her own integrity, to have as good a time as she could.

It was a strange medley of conclusions, and it left her without any well-considered plan of action,

but she contented herself with it for the present, and went on to plan her costume for the party.

Therefore, when Mrs. Strathmore at lunch inquired in the most business-like way in the world:

"Have you decided, my daughter, what you will wear at the party?" she was thoroughly ready with her answer.

"Yes, mamma, and I hope my plan will commend itself to you from all points. It is this: my blue silk I have worn but twice, and it is quite fresh. I want it for a new over-dress, just clouds and clouds of tulle with sprays of pink and crimson all over it; and for ornaments the lovely set of pink coral which you showed me the other day."

Mrs. Strathmore said, smiling. "At your age, simplicity and freshness are everything, but not all girls of your inexperience would be aware of it. I have only one suggestion to make, and that may be questionable. I have quantities of delicate old Mothlin lace, dainty as hoar frost, which is at your disposal, if you fancy it. Really, since we cannot afford to look in the least pinched or poor y-striken, I think you would better accept it."

Miss Ida smiled rather satirically, but quietly accepted the offer with thanks.

"And what will you wear, mamma?" she asked.

"A ruby velvet dress, trimmed with point Venice, which I wore when I was presented to the Queen of Naples, and my diamonds, the full parure."

Ida drew in her breath a little.

"How magnificent!" she exclaimed. "Mamma, I quite long to see you in such a costume."

"My velvet was bought in Lyons, and the best that ever that market afforded, and it is slashed with white satin."

The preparations for the reception went on, and Ida, who was young and impressionable, quite caught her mother's spirit.

At last the long-anticipated evening arrived. Mrs. Strathmore, standing under the costly chandelier in

the front drawing-room, seemed by some magic to have won back the full beauty of her youth, while her manner and carriage were such as no young woman, no woman indeed who had seen less of the world of fashion, could have attained. Instinctively her guests bowed before her as before a queen, and for once again she tasted, as she had so often tasted before, the dangerous sweets of a fascinating woman's triumph.

Even Ida was amazed at the homage which she exacted, and could not help thinking what a pity it was that such a woman had not been born to an inalienable heritage of pomp and luxury.

"I do not wonder," she thought to herself, "that she hates the thought of poverty. It must be glorious to be able so to move the hearts of men!"

Even Ida was in her own way achieving a triumph scarcely less marked. It was not only that Howard Felsenthal was present, and the undisguised admirer of her charms, but men far more mature in judgment, and quite his equal in point of position and fortune, rendered her allegiance as well. Ida had not the nature of a flirt, and it was only the secret consciousness of her heart that she had already given more than she could afford to Howard Felsenthal that made her treat him with an outward semblance of coldness and indifference.

During the early part of the evening he was willing to attribute this manner to the obligation she was under to make herself entertaining to all her guests alike.

He made a desperate effort to secure her hand, and succeeded, and for the first time, that evening, claimed her for a waltz.

Certainly for Ida there had been no happier moment than when she felt his arm about her waist.

And her joy was so real that Howard Felsenthal felt it, and was thereby repaid for all his penance of waiting and watching while her favours had been dispensed to others.

So, absorbed in each other, these two did not notice a little episode which was transpiring in another part of the rooms.

When Mrs. Strathmore returned from the supper-room, it was with that feeling of pure elation expressed upon her countenance which the hostess never is able to experience until supper is over, and has proved a success.

She was leaning upon the arm of one of the most distinguished of her guests, and one could see that he found her conversation charming.

Suddenly her face blanched even through its thick coating of cosmetics, and her eye lost its light.

"Pardon me," she said to her companion, "I must not monopolise you any longer. The band sounds the signal for dancing. Let me introduce you to a most charming partner."

And so she was rid of her companion just in time to receive the salutations of a late guest, who had in fact arrived while the company were at supper; a guest uninvited, indeed most unexpected.

"I have the honour to salute you, madam," he said, as he bowed over her coldly-extented hand, "and to congratulate you upon this delightful evening. I trust you will pardon my intrusion. I have but just arrived in this town, and hearing through my friend, Mr. Watts, that you entertained this evening, made bold to present myself upon the strength of an old acquaintance."

"And I am sure you are most welcome, Count de Grau," said Mrs. Strathmore, yet still with a chill in her voice and a constraint in her manner which belied her words. "May I inquire if you have been long in this country?"

"Since yesterday," he replied, suavely. "Had I been here longer, I should have done myself the honour to call on you before presenting myself in so unceremonious a fashion. But I trust a want of punctilio may be pardoned between old friends."

In spite of herself, Madame Strathmore sighed. Was not her game with fate hard enough already, without the intrusion of this most unexpected element?

But her woman's wit came quickly to her service.

Whatever this man knew about her, the disclosure of which might ruin her present plans, he must be bribed to conceal it.

"Ah!" she said, "it is very delightful to meet again the companion of those happy days abroad. Should I ever have left the old world, I wonder, except at the call of duty? You do not know, perhaps, the treasure of which I have become possessed since I parted from my European friends. It is no less than a daughter. She was but a child when I left this country, and was pursuing her education while I was abroad. Now she is restored to me, a beautiful young woman. Let us find her, that I may present you."

The Count de Grau bowed, and showed his shining teeth in a courtly smile.

stand this ruse, but, with true breeding, he waited for an explanation.

Mrs. Strathmore counted upon finding Ida among the dancers; but, to reach that apartment, she purposely led her guest through the whole of the rooms, that he might behold the grandeur of her surroundings.

But when they reached the dancing-room there was no Ida to be found.

"It must be that she has taken refuge in the conservatory," she said.

And they walked on to the door of that apartment, which was not the least attractive of the suite which was at the disposal of the guests.

And there surely, in a nook shaded by Oriental ferns and palms, Ida and Howard were found.

It was impossible to hear what they were saying, but Mrs. Strathmore's practised eye took in at once the significance of their attitude, and she inwardly quashed her teeth lest she might have interrupted a proposal.

The Count de Grau, too, put the same interpretation upon the scene, but, for reasons best known to himself, he viewed the catastrophe in quite another light.

And in truth it was a critical moment. Howard had been on the verge of a declaration.

In fact, so significant had his words been at this moment, that if Ida had, in fault of the opportunity for a better response, merely returned the fervid pressure of his hand, Howard would have held himself to be engaged, and in honour bound to defend his claim against the world.

But who can tell the mystery of a woman's heart?

While Howard's words had been received by Ida with trembling joy, the sight of her mother put all romance and sentiment to flight, and though she inwardly raged against the unseasonable interruption, outwardly she received the pair with smile and a seeming indifference for Howard and his offer that was very trying to that young man.

In another instant the two were made acquainted with the Count de Grau, and Howard felt that he had encountered a rival, and he feared a rival not to be despised.

Which in a sense was true. The count was a veritable count, and though there was no lack of evidence as to his general worthlessness of character, in the society in which Mrs. Strathmore moved he was likely to be a lion.

He was in search of a wife also, an heiress if possible, though to his habit of thought and life a beautiful woman like Ida Strathmore was a fortune in herself.

In the society which he had frequented of fast young men of fashion, who found the necessary excitement of their lives in the gaming-table and similar resorts, a woman's charms had a very definite value; and since the count knew, none better, the facility with which riches take their flight, a fascinating woman who could always compel to his society those from whom new resources might be won was quite comparable to the fabled fowl who laid golden eggs. Even a woman of fortune, if she did not sympathise with his plans of life, might speedily become a bore.

But a beautiful woman who loved pleasure and excitement, though she had not a penny, might be a valuable partner in the game of life.

So reasoned the count, and, from a long acquaintance with Mrs. Strathmore, he was inclined to think that her daughter Ida, incomparably the most beautiful woman he had met in an age, might be the very trump card he needed.

Therefore the count began to pay assiduous court to Ida.

But Ida, novice though she was, was not without her own ideas of the count's worth.

"He will do for mamma," she said. "But he is not to my taste."

Still there was a fascination in accepting his attentions, the more that she was out of temper with Howard.

After the tête-à-tête in the conservatory had been interrupted, there had not been another moment in which she could speak to him, but she had confidently expected that he would call the next day. And Howard had not done so. The truth was that circumstances made it impossible, and when he did come, his delay had rendered her impatient, and her manner was not encouraging. Moreover, he both found and left the count at her side, and went away with a burning heart.

In a week's time such an estrangement had grown up between them that speech upon either side was impossible.

Howard was indignant and angry, and Ida was very sore at heart, but they both flirted and danced and sang, and played the part of studied indifference, as young people have under such circumstances since the world began.

Meantime Mrs. Strathmore was troubled. She was wise enough and motherly enough to see that Howard Felsenthal was a much better match for her daughter than the count, yet so reserved was Ida that she could form no opinion as to the grounds upon which she stood with her lover; and meantime, if the worst came to the worst, the count might do much better, Mrs. Strathmore thought, than no lover at all.

At first she had been apprehensive concerning his knowledge of her former ways of life, but she soon found that the count was inclined to take things as they were, and make the most of such friendship as might exist between them.

When she found that he was really inclined to marry Ida, she winced a little, secretly. Some old memories made it rather a bitter portion; yet she felt that Ida had youth and beauty on her side, and that to resist their charm would be hopeless. On the other hand, when it dawned upon her that Ida herself was only amusing herself with the count, to hide deeper feeling, she grew anxious.

And as the weeks wore on, Howard Felsenthal had gone abroad at last. Ida perversely refused to give heed to any other lover; her funds were growing fearfully low, and only some sudden stroke of fortune could, it seemed, rescue Mrs. Strathmore from ruin.

But she was not a woman to succumb to fate without a struggle. After a long and weary day of anxious thought, she came to a sudden resolve. She sent for Ida.

"My daughter," she said, "I have an affair of importance to communicate to you. The Count de Grau has empowered me to make you an offer of his hand. He asks you to share his title and his fortune. What is your answer?"

"Mamma!" said Ida, "you are dreadfully abrupt. I never knew you show so little respect for sentiment before."

"Yes," said Mrs. Strathmore, quite pale in the face from the combined effects of her own audacity, for what she had said was not at all true, and some other sentiment, "yes; but it is not a time for beating about the bush. Will you marry the count?"

"No, mamma—not if I can help it."

"Well, child, no one will force you," and she sighed a sigh of relief.

"But you must put it to him in some more gracious fashion than that."

"Of course. I have only one thing to ask you. He will come here this evening; if he asks for you, you must not see him."

"That I can very readily grant. But, mamma, what are we to do?"

"That remains to be seen. One thing is certain: we must, in some way, utilise whatever of good the fates may send."

From which it vaguely dawned on Ida that her mother meant to marry the count herself, which gave her a mixed sensation.

"Well, mamma, success to you, whatever your plans may be. I'll keep out of your way, you may be certain of that."

And then Ida went to her own room, and indulged in a spasm of tearless weeping, which proved that the girl's soul had been touched, and that in a way that was exquisitely painful.

She heard the ring of the door-bell and the sound of the Count de Grau's voice. Ida knew that he had entered the drawing-room, where her mother awaited him.

In a certain sort of clairvoyant vision, she saw her mother the wife of this man, whom she despised, and herself forced either to accept such a life as they would give her or to separate herself from them entirely, and contrive some way to support herself. Either course seemed impossible.

"Once I might have taken care of myself in some simple, quiet way," she said, "and been tolerably happy. But now it is different."

And then for the first time she bitterly realised how this short year of foolish, careless living had demoralised her.

Her passion for Howard Felsenthal, unfortunate as its issue had proved, was in itself a greater load than she felt able to carry; but when to that was added the necessity of earning her own living, it seemed that her burden was greater than she could bear.

In those hours of intense agony there recurred to her some of the pious lessons of her youth.

In the morning she was prostrate, but calm. She took breakfast in her own room. It was near lunch time when, having made a simple toilet, she descended to the library. She met there Mrs. Strathmore.

"Good morning, my daughter," said that lady, with something more than her usual graciousness of manner. "You are looking ill. Have you not slept well?"

"Not very, mamma. But you are looking unusually well. May I inquire the reason?"

She said it with a sickly fear at her heart, yet obeying a natural impulse to hear the worst and be done with suspense.

"Certainly you may, my daughter. Fortune has intervened for our rescue. The Count de Grau has done me the honour to propose for my hand. We shall be married in a month. I know the count well. He is a man whom fortune never deserts, and I look upon our future as secure."

Madam told her little story neatly and well. She did not see fit to say that she had perfectly fathomed the count's plan of marrying Ida in order always to have a bait for the young men of whom it was his habit to make prey, and that when she had been able to say to him that that plan was perfectly impracticable without her assistance, and that in fact her tact and knowledge of the world would more than double the value of Ida's charms, he had consented to make her the Countess de Grau, for the sake of thus securing Ida's presence in his establishment, where indeed as an unmarried lady she would be twice as attractive as if she were madam.

Mrs. Strathmore had played her cards well, and she had won the trick. To whom the final game would go remained still to be seen.

As for Ida, outwardly her fortune looked very dark, yet inwardly peace possessed her soul. The more she learned of the Count de Grau, the more she wondered at her mother's toleration of him, and the more apparent became the impossibility of her ever consenting to share their fortunes. Yet some instinct warned her to keep this determination a secret for the present. All that she could do was to limit her expenses to the lowest possible sum, and hoard the money thus saved from her allowance. In this way she calculated that by the wedding-day she should have in her possession at least thirty pounds.

Her plan was then, after seeing her mother married, to bid her good-bye, and return to the little country town where she had been brought up, and to the friends of her youth, among whom she had no doubt but she could secure some employment which would yield her a modest livelihood.

She had not reached this resolution without a struggle.

She had not yet exhausted the romance of elegant living, and though indeed some of its possible hardships had been rather roughly revealed to her, she had nevertheless a vision remaining of a life of luxury which might be not only enjoyable, but worthy and commendable as well. But far harder than the struggle which it cost her to give up the life of gay society was the thought that she was voluntarily resigning all hope of ever again meeting Howard Felsenthal. That sacrifice cost her many a midnight vigil, and robbed her cheeks of its roses. Yet she never faltered. "I know what honesty and self-respect demand," she said to herself, "He will take care of me if I am found in the right way. In the paths of wrong-doing I have no such security."

The wedding-day came at length. Mrs. Strathmore enjoyed once more the delight of giving a great party, and this time the eclat of it was heightened by the fact that the event which made her again a wife conferred upon her also a title.

Her parlours were thronged by an admiring crowd, and in her dress of pearl and silver she fairly set time at defiance, and won by conquest the homage which a younger bride would only have taken at the hands of nature.

Ida was simply robed in spotless white, and had never looked more beautiful.

The bridegroom, gallant yet, in spite of his gray hairs, bestowed upon her quite as much attention as upon his bride, and many a man of the world present felt little shives of disgust at the thought of the innocent young girl being thrown into such intimate relations with a practised roué like the Count de Grau.

On the morning after the wedding, Ida quietly informed her mother of her determination.

Mrs. Strathmore, or rather the Countess de Grau, received the intelligence with mingled surprise, vexation and relief.

"Ida," she said, "you must be insane! It all comes of your ignorance of the world. But your step-father will never permit it. He has counted upon your presence and aid in all his future plans, and he is not a man, I warn you, to be easily balked of his plans."

"Mamma," said Ida, "I know all that. I have thought of it much; but, believe me, I shall never yield to his designs. Mamma, it will be in the end far better for you if I am not of your family. If the count feels himself deceived, it is his own fault. I am under no obligations whatever to him, and my obligations to you, which are many, are better discharged in the way I propose than in any other. I beg you to believe that my determination is unalterable, and you will learn before many hours that

neither you nor the Count de Gran can in any way affect it."

Madam did not take this hint. Perhaps she did not choose to. It was doubtless the easiest way for her out of her dilemma to appear incredulous.

Certain it is that when the dinner-bell rang Ida did not appear, and when search was made, no one seemed more alarmed and mystified than madam the countess when it was discovered that her daughter was not in the establishment.

A note was left on her dressing-table, explaining her absence and its cause, quite as though she had never spoken of her determination to her mother, and assuring her that all pursuit would be quite useless.

As for the count, he raved and stormed and called in the police, but to no avail. Perhaps he had his own reason for not desiring to place himself in too close relations with the civil force; at any rate, he called off the detectives on the second day, and gave up all hope of recovering his truant daughter.

But he was sullen for many days thereafter, and it required all his wife's patience and tact to restore him to good humour.

These were critical days for her. She well knew that the count, even in his own country, had never had the fear of the law greatly before his eyes. Whether in this strange land he would in the least scruple to leave her wholly to her fate, was a point which might well be held in doubt; but patience and a woman's wit conquered at last, and when the count sailed for Germany, his bride was his companion.

Meantime Ida had gone back to Ferndale and to her old friends. She was not too cordially received at first, but when her story came to be fully understood, there were a few who gave her sincere welcome.

There happened fortunately to be an opening in a private school, which the thorough education which she had received under her father's sensible care enabled her to fill, and she was soon settled at the new occupation, in the receipt of a moderate income.

Three years passed, years of toil and of some minor discouragements, yet on the whole Ida had gained much in strength and self-reliance.

She had not been without offers of marriage, but she listened to none of them. It seemed even to herself quite unreasonable that her heart would not respond to any overtures, but she always thought of the one joy she had so narrowly missed, as a bar to all other experiences.

"And so," she said, when she had told the simple truth to her latest lover, "I suppose I shall grow gray and go down to my grave a lonely woman, because Fate, with a single breath, parted me forever from Howard Felsenthal."

Her listener started at the name, but said nothing.

That evening he wrote to an old friend: "The dream of love of which I gave you some hint in my last, has had a rather rude awakening. The lady is not less charming than she was; rather the long and free interview with her which I have had has greatly increased my respect for her; but she has no heart to give me, and so henceforth I either walk alone or seek some other fair one, since Ida Strathmore once gave her heart to a man from whom Fate parted her most strangely, and has no other at her disposal."

A week later Ida sat alone in her schoolroom one afternoon, looking over the exercises of a French class.

The work was wearisome, and when the last copy-book was passed to the pile of those corrected, she laid her head down upon her folded arms, and fell into a sorrowful reverie, which ended in a silent fit of weeping.

The world seemed in that moment so desolate, her life so weary. Would it ever end, the long, long waiting for death?"

She was too much absorbed in her own thoughts to hear the door softly open, or to note an approaching footstep.

Presently some one stood beside her, and a hand was laid upon her shoulder.

She looked up hastily, gave a startled cry, and fell back in her chair as one likely to faint. But she did not faint; she only sat looking with all her soul in her eyes, and trembling like a bird in the hand of the fowler.

"Dear Ida," said a voice she well knew, "forgive me if I have intruded upon your solitude too rashly, but I could not wait. Have you any word of welcome for me, or must I, too, join the ranks of the hopeless?"

She put out both her hands to him, but she could not speak.

Then he clasped his arms about her and drew her to his heart, and she wept there in silence till her grief and joy found relief.

"Come, dear," he said, at length, in a voice so cheerful that it was like tonic to failing strength, "the woman of you has had way. Won't you think now, for a moment, of the restlessness, eager manhood that has waited all these years for you?"

She looked up then and smiled, and said:

"Oh, Howard, it has been so hard, and the joy came so suddenly at length, that it was near killing me. What can I say—what can I do—but just lie here and drink in peace and repose? How did you find me?" she added, at length, when a half-hour's talk had calmed her nerves somewhat.

"Through the agency of a discarded lover of yours, to whom you had the frankness to confess your sorrows. I shall never cease to thank both you and him for being such true friends to each other. Two years ago I met the Count and Countess de Grau at Manoco, and learned of your sudden desertion of them. I thought more of you in that moment than ever before, and came home determined to find you; but Fate has outwitted me till this hour. But Fate has done her worst now. Hereafter naught but death shall part thee and me."

They had a simple wedding, but it was a most happy one.

And Ida returned to take up again a life of ease and luxury; but it was not now a life given to gay society, but consecrated to nobler uses and purer ends.

At noon the ladder, and the pail full, splashing her all over with whitewash, and remained on her head as gracefully as a hat seven sizes too large for her. When she removed it she looked paler than a gravestone, and sadder, too. "Ah, poor us! we could catch her breath," she groaned.

"Ah, I'll have revenge for this, you miserable rhinoceros, see if I don't!"

And grasping her umbrella firmly, she marched stoically out.

TRUE LOVE.

It's an advantage to beguile your neighbour's servant girl into your own service. A servant girl stores up family secrets as a cask stores up water for future use. A domestic recently left the employment of a master and mistress whose domestic relations had long defiled the quietude of the neighbourhood, and moved into a family across the way. One of the first questions which the new mistress asked her was in reference to her late employer.

"Are you sure that they love each other, Mary?"

"Oh, yes, mar'm," answered the Irish angel, proud of an opportunity to open her reservoir; "it's water than honey they are to one another—they do be using the same tooth-brush."

A DIFFERENT KIND OF HOSE.

For some time past it has been one of the duties of the officers of one of the suburbs to go to the various houses and ascertain the size, etc., of the hose used in sprinkling the gardens. One had watched a long time at the back yard of an aristocratic mansion to try and obtain the necessary information from the servant. But she didn't appear, and finally, in a fit of desperation, the officer walked round to the front door and rang.

A moment later the lady of the house appeared herself and opened the door. This rather staggered the officer, and without a word of preliminary explanation he touched his hat and led off with:

"Good morning, madam! I called to inquire what kind of hose you use."

"Sir!" said the astonished lady, growing about a gutter-heel taller.

"Yes'm. Very disagreeable to trouble you, but we have to make these inquiries, mum. Duty, you know."

"Duty, indeed, sir! You miscreant!"

"Beg pardon, madam. Perhaps you don't use any hose. I'm sorry; but I don't know."

"Not use any hose! Oh, you villain!"

"Well, perhaps it's rubber hose, madam?"

"Rubber hose?" she screamed. "You abominable wretch! What do you mean?"

"I mean what kind of hose—"

"Well, of all the impudence!"

"I ask a thousand pardons, madam; I see you don't know."

"I don't know!"

"But here comes the kitchen maid. She can tell me what I want to know."

"Susan, if you say one word to this miserable brute, I'll discharge you! She can tell you, indeed, can she? I should like to see her."

And so the officer had to retreat finally without accomplishing his purpose.

The lady told her husband, the husband flew in a rage to the sergeant, the sergeant explained the matter, and they both agreed that it was a great outrage that ought to be kept very quiet.

GO ON EATING.—A sensible writer advises those who would enjoy good eating to keep good-natured, for, says he, "an angry man cannot tell whether he is eating boiled cabbage or stewed umbrellas."

These girls say that bees are like bees, the moment a pretty flower is discovered the whole hive comes swarming round. But unlike the bees, only one gets badly bitten.

A YOUNG lady in a neighbouring town, one day last week went into a shop and thus unburdened herself to the shop girl:

"It is my desire to obtain a pair of circular elastic appendages capable of being contracted or expanded by means of oscillating bars harnessed to the appendages that sparkle like particles of gold leaf set with Cape May diamonds, and which are utilized for retaining in proper position the habiliment of the lower extremities which in these days of cold weather are most inconvenient."

The vendor of calicoes was nonplussed, but not wishing to appear ignorant said that he was "just out."

After her departure he mumbled in silence for a few moments, when a new light broke upon his distracted brain and he burst forth with:

"By thunder! T'is bet that woman wanted a pair of garters."

SANCTA SIMPLICIA.—Mrs. Gollightly (fishing for a compliment). "Ah! Mr. McJoseph, beauty is the most precious of all gifts

for a woman! I'd sooner possess beauty than anything in the world!"

Mr. McJoseph (under the impression that he is making himself very agreeable): "I'm sure, Mrs. Golightly, that any regret you possibly feel on that score must be amply compensated for by—or—the consciousness of your moral worth, you know,—and of your various mental accomplishments!"

—Punch.

A DECIDED DIFFERENCE.

I HAVE a home across the waves
That roll on Thames's bosom wide,
For much in rent the hollow saves
Who lives upon the Surrey side;
And nightly over Waterloo
With thousands of my kind I pour
(If pour's a thing a man can do),
From Middlesex to Surrey shore,

I have an eye that's apt to mark
A sudden change in men and things,
And one as though from light to dark
This step across the water brings,
From fashions of the present day
To those of quite the year before,
He fits at once who wends his way
From Middlesex to Surrey shore.

In two and three the people stroll
Along the gaily-lighted Strand;
Some places of pastime in the goal,
And pleasure all the task in hand.
Across the stream's a motley crew,
Who buy and haggle evermore;
Of life you got too points of view
From Middlesex to Surrey shore.

—Fun.

HOW THEY DO IT THERE.

EASY-GOING PAPA: Lost her spade, has she? Never mind, we'll buy you another, my dear; directly we go on the ephaphane.

FRIENDLY SEAFARING PERSON (who knows the ways of those parts): Lor', master, there ain't no 'casion to do that. Let me keep her eyes open, and she'll soon find one belongin' to some one else!

—Judy.

NOVEL FEATURES.

Lady: "Too bad—too bad, Bailey! Only your second morning here, and you are quite intoxicated!"

Gardener: "Nose a bit! Look agin, my ladish; ith because I'm now! Minch a face as you mustn't git ushod to, and then you'll find I ain't half drunkash ash I might shewsh to a stranger!"

—Fun.

"GREAT EXPECTATIONS."

Tom (to Jack, who has just received a letter): You look precious down, old man! Nothing wrong, is there, with the rich old aunt who's been so bad? I hope she's not worse."

Jacky: "N-o-o—she's better!"

—Fun.

SWEETS BY WIRE.

By mistake, in a telegram from Calcutta the other day, the "Jan of Lasbybys" was entitled "the Jan of Luxebhol". A serious mistake, only to be paralleled by calling raspberry jam gooseberry!

—Punch.

AMENDMENT OF THE CRUELTY TO ANIMALS BILL.

Foxhunting in future to be limited to bag-foxes, and no fox henceforth to be hunted save under chloroform.

—Punch.

DESPAIR.

Brown has locked his portmanteau with one of those letter padlocks, and forgotten the word that opens it!

(Only ten minutes to dinner)

—Punch.

A JUMP AT A CONCLUSION.

GERALDINE: "You shan't be my aunt; you shall be my sister!"

AUNT ANNE: "No, I am your papa's sister and so I must be your aunt."

GERALDINE (after a pause): "Then, was papa my uncle before he was married?"

STATISTICS.

GERMAN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES.—The Library of the Berlin University contains about 115,000 printed volumes, and 40,000 charts. The University of Bonn contains 180,000 volumes, several hundred manuscripts, and a large collection of maps. The University of Breslau has 340,000 volumes of books, and 2,900 manuscripts. The Erlangen University has 110,000 printed volumes, and 1,900 manuscripts, besides 50,000 treatises, 17,000 autograph letters, and a collection of designs and engravings. The Freiburg

University contains 250,000 printed volumes, and 500 manuscripts. The Giessen University has 160,000 printed volumes, and 1,266 manuscripts; that of Gottingen, 400,000 printed volumes, and 5,000 manuscripts; that of Greifswald, 70,000 volumes; and that of Halle, 100,000 volumes, and 1,000 manuscripts. The University of Heidelberg has 300,000 volumes, 70,000 treatises, 8,000 manuscripts, 3,000 charts, a collection of maps, and another of engravings. The University of Jena has 100,000 volumes, and that of Kiel 150,000 volumes, and several hundred manuscripts. The University of Konigsberg has 290,000 volumes, in addition to about 50,000 double copies of books for the purpose of exchange. The University of Leipzig contains 350,000 printed volumes, and 4,000 manuscripts. The University of Munich contains 283,500 volumes, 17,500 manuscripts, 3,600 portraits, and 3,200 medals. The University of Rostock has 140,000 volumes; that of Tübingen, 280,000 volumes, 60,000 treatises, and 2,000 manuscripts; and that of Wurzburg more than 200,000 volumes, and 2,900 manuscripts. The library of the Strasburg University is said to contain 300,000 volumes, of which 5,400 relate to the history of Alsace, and about 500 manuscripts. The "Illustrirter Kalender" adds, that the library of the Vienna University contains 211,230 volumes, and 83 manuscripts, and that the library of the Basle University contains 100,000 printed volumes, 4,000 manuscripts, and 180 charts.

THE GUESTS OF THE HEART.

The door of the heart has an easy swing,
As it opens and shuts at will;
So incomers find it a handy thing
To enter without either knock or ring,
And all the spare chambers fill.

Thus heart has many a doubtful guest,
As well as of high degree,
Whose mien and whose manners are not the
best;

In fact, poor heart, it must be confess'd,
Keeps a sort of hostelry.

If Pride comes in with her haughty air,
Meek Love may go to the wall,
And Folly and Pleasure be fed with care,
While Duty puts up with more common
fare,

Or never gets fed at all.

Of all the dangerous guests that be
In the heart of mortal man,
That enter in through the door so wide,
And the honours, when once there, divide,
Temptation leads the van.

He comes oftentimes in an angel's guise,
Arrayed in robes of light—
Or clad in the garments of the wise,
His various arts he safely plies,
To seduce put to flight.

The door of the heart has an easy swing;
Then let us guard it well,
For a doubtful guest, though on the wing
Another more doubtful still may bring
The motley throng to swell.

M. A. K.

GEMS.

It costs more to revenge wrongs than it does to bear them.

Those who entertain suspicions of all are much to be suspected.

There are times when, although speech might be silver, silence is gold.

The best penance we can do for envying another's merits is to endeavour to surpass it.

Where true fortitude dwells, loyalty, bounty, friendship and fidelity may be found.

There is no surer test of integrity than a well-proportioned expenditure.

Republics come to an end by luxurious habits; monarchies by poverty.

Let friendship creep gently to a height; if it rush to it, it may soon run itself out of breath.

A fool in high station is like a man on the top of a mountain; everybody appears small to him, and he appears small to everybody.

Nature never fills our hearts with more of her beauty than when we're recovering from sickness. Like a mother, as she is, she then leans over us lovingly, smiles her sweetest smiles, and kisses us into beautiful dreams.

Never compare thy condition with those above thee; but to secure thy content look up on the thousands with whom thou wouldst not, for

any interest, change thy fortune and condition.

Always have a good stock of patience laid by, and be sure you put it where you can easily find it.

We must surrender to reason, as soon as it appears, and deem it beautiful even on the lips of a pedant.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

ICE-CREAM IN THE COUNTRY WITHOUT THIS ORNAMENTAL FACILITY.—Take three pints of milk, four eggs, well-beaten, three-fourths of a pound of sugar, and one table-spoonful corn starch; mix in a three-quart tin pail; boil in a kettle of water till quite thick; add one pint sweet cream, and flavour to taste. Freeze in a common water-pail, or any vessel of suitable size, with equal parts of ice-chopped fine, and coarse salt. Rotate the pail, and stir frequently.

ORANGE PUDDING.—Wash the salt out of half a pound of butter, mix it with the same quantity of powdered sugar and a wine-glass of brandy; grate the rind of three large oranges, and squeeze out the juice; beat six fresh eggs, stir them into the butter and sugar, then add the prepared orange; lay a puff paste around the pudding-dish, and bake from half to three-quarters of an hour; eat cold with sugar. Lemons may be used the same way.

LEMON CUSTARD.—Beat the yolks of eight eggs with half a pound of sugar; add a pint of boiling water, rinds of two lemons, grated, and juice of same; boil until it thickens, and then add a large wine-glass of white wine and half a glass of brandy; boil a few minutes, and strain into glasses; eaten when very cold.

FRUIT CAKE.—One cup molasses, one pound flour, one of sugar, three-fourths a pound butter, two of seeded raisins, three of currants, one of citron, half pound blanched almonds, half ounce mace, one wine-glassful brandy, ten eggs; cream the sugar and butter; add the eggs beaten separately; stir in the flour, brandy, spices, then the fruit.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE SULTAN'S WIVES.—The new Sultan of Turkey has three wives, but the first is still his favourite. She is about twenty-six years old, not pretty, but distinguished-looking and intelligent, and has great influence with her husband. She has had no children, and Murad has, therefore, been obliged to marry two other wives chosen for him by her. She showed her intelligence by picking out two extremely beautiful but extremely stupid young women, one of whom is the mother now of Prince Paladin, a child of ten, and the other a princess of the mature age of four.

FAMILY INTERMARRIAGES.—It is in Germany that the effects of these unnatural marriages are most severely felt. If money there is in a family, the head of the house insists that it shall not go out of it. Hence, both in the case of gold and land, marriages and intermarriages go on generation after generation, the relationships growing ever nearer and nearer, more and more confused, and the results as may be readily imagined, ever more and more disastrous. In no other country does one meet with the same number of goitrous throats, scarred necks, spinal diseases, hip diseases, bad teeth, and generally defective bone structure, as in Germany.

DISCOVERIES NEAR ROME.—Near Rome, in the Villa Palombara, the discovery has just been made of a head of Venus, of artistic workmanship, and in excellent preservation, also a Mercury with caduceus, and some bronze vases and sculptures in marble. At Ripetta, an ancient port of the Tiber, have been found a column of mottled alabaster, and a large sarcophagus of marble with genii in relief and inscriptions; and in the Villa Babuino some remains of walls and a mosaic pavement.

EGYPTIAN SCULPTURE.—A valuable relic of Egyptian sculpture has been found on the banks of the Nile, near the ruins of the Temple of Karnak. A sandstone chest, also a Mercurius with caduceus, and a green-basalt figure of a hippopotamus, beautifully carved and polished, and standing about three feet high. Hieroglyphic writings on the chest show the carving to belong to the period of Psammitic I., and to be contemporary with the green basalt heifer in the British Museum at Cairo, hitherto considered the finest carving extant. The hippopotamus, however, is a more delicate and perfect specimen.

A rod of brickwork equals 272 superficial feet, 1½ bricks thick by 4,850 bricks average work. One yard of paving equals 36 bricks flat or 52 on edge. There are 384 bricks to a cubic yard, and 1,000 bricks, closely stacked, occupy about 55 cubic feet.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A. H. M.—You can obtain the material prepared of any artists' colourman. The manufacture is far too complicated for an amateur.

E. Q. D.—Cover the surface of steel with soap, then write with aqua-fortis.

ANCIENT BARON can obtain the book by applying at one of the old booksellers in Holywell Street, Strand, London.

ONE OF OUR CONSTANT READERS.—We think you are much too young to know whether you are really in love, and we think the lady also must be of the same opinion. Evidently she treats the matter very jocularly, and our opinion is when she meets with one more manly she will give you the slip. If you wish to stop it "don't."

WOLVERHAMPTON.—Your remedy is by your lover making the concession and becoming a converted Jew. He will still be Jew, but not bound by the "objectionable law," as it is called by you.

A REPENTANT SINNER.—We hope for your own sake you are what you now style yourself, for the merit of leaving off bad habits depends more upon yourself than the advice of others.

W. E. H.—We cannot advise you of any secure means of investing so small an amount to bring in £6. per week, which is equal to £300. Cannot you start some little business that you can manage. Be careful not to get into anything that may sacrifice the little all you have.

J. W. D.—In the first place you are too young to know your own mind, and therefore unfit for a married life, and if you choose to wed now you will always repent. Your mind is unsettled and unformed. Better to wait three or four years. You are now suffering from an attack of silly love, but if you must marry, take a girl who is younger than yourself, and with as much more discretion as is possible to have. But be advised, and keep single as long as you can.

J. H. has no occasion to despair on account of her being tall and stout, as she describes herself. Many are particularly desirous of being acquainted with fine ladies, as you may be classified.

MATOR.—After so brief an acquaintance, the mother was justified in refusing to allow you to have an interview with, or correspond with, her daughter. But the permission to pay a visit on your return to the town was a concession for which you ought to have felt grateful. Mistrust you, indeed! We wish all mothers were as prudent as this one.

L. M.—You must decide for yourself. How could we advise you to marry a man whom we never saw? But this we can say to you—in the choice of a husband look more to sobriety, industry, and a nice sense of honour than to good looks or plausible manners.

EMMA.—The pink, red or white is the emblem of pure love. The daisy means innocence.

S. E. D.—A betrothed lady need not seclude herself from society. Etiquette does not require it, and health forbids it. Her manner should be as unembarrassed as possible, but she should avoid unmarried gentlemen. Lovers are suspicious mortals, and they cannot help it—for the man that loves truly guards jealously.

SIDNEY.—We are surprised that the following fact did not strike our intelligent correspondent, namely : that clothing in itself has no property of bestowing heat, but that it is chiefly used in preventing dispersion of the temperature of the body, and, in some instances, of defending it from that of the atmosphere. The power of preserving heat is due to the same principle, whatever form the garment may assume, whether the natural covering of birds and animals or whether the most beautiful and elegant tissues of human manufacture. In every case it is the power which the coverings possess of retaining in their meshes atmospheric air that is the cause of their warmth. All the advantages of wool—and they are many—may be obtained by wearing the woollen garment outside one of linen; indeed, this is preferable in warm weather to wearing the woollen next the skin, since the linen absorbs the perspiration, while the woollen garment preserves the warmth of the body and prevents the inconvenience resulting from its evaporation.

M. M.—A wife who voluntarily separates from her husband cannot compel him to contribute towards her maintenance.

E.—A good daughter is sure to make a good wife—that is, if she be properly treated. It is not an unreasonable request to wait a little longer. Parents always have a prudent motive for delays in such matters, and,

rely upon it, if they had entertained serious objections to the match, they would have broken it off altogether. A few years, in such cases, generally means a few months. Wait—impatience will only injure your probably bright prospects.

SUBSCRIBER.—A lady ought never to be introduced to a gentleman, but the gentleman to the lady, and therefore a lady need not rise from her seat when a gentleman is presented to her.

MANX.—The best way to win the heart of a young man worth winning is to be modest, cheerful, industrious and intelligent—always taking care to avoid coquetry and affectation. Be as good as you seem, and he will soon discover your worth.

LOVIX asks whether hearts ever do really break. The expression is figurative, but there are cases on record of post mortem examinations, after very sudden deaths, revealing the fact that hearts have actually been ruptured. But the phrase has another and quite as practical a meaning. All violent emotions impair the nervous system, and as the heart regulates its action—in fact, the animal economy—of course it is the first to suffer when "pain and anguish wring the brow," or grief like seething lightning flashes over the soul its burning agony.

HIRE.—Corporal punishment should never be inflicted upon children by their parents. Such a proceeding substitutes fear as the motive of conduct instead of love, and no good character was ever formed by the inculcation of a dread of physical pain. The precept "he that smortheth his rod spoileth the child" is not to be taken literally. The proper training of a child is a more serious and difficult matter, and more troublesome also than the administration of bodily chastisement, which teaches nothing but hatred and fear.

SIMON.—Why will not mothers know that to invite and possess the confidence of their daughters is to secure them from evil? Never make them afraid to tell you anything, never make them ashamed of the natural desire to have attention from the other sex. Admit the Likins for it as belonging to youth—to your past youth—but at the same time enforce the judicious timing of it, and above all encourage a frank avowal of sympathy with, their youthful preferences. Many a young girl, now lost to herself and to society, might have been saved by such a course.

MY LOVE IS SUCH A FAUDE.—My love has many artless ways That fill me with delight; She's innocent, she's beautiful, And oh, her smile is bright!

And yet where I think of her A shadow will intrude.

This paragon of loveliness Is such a little prude!

I claim a lover's privilege And strive to kiss her lips But like a queen, she offers me Her distant finger-tips.

She says I'm too presumptuous, She even calls me rude; Which wouldn't be the case, I'm sure, If she were not a prude.

I am not used to courtly ways, And know not how to woo In formal style, with bended knee,

As royal suitors do;

And yet a loyal heart I bear

As any king has known,

And ask the maid I love to share

The wealth of such a throne

She keeps me at a distance, yet

I read upon her face

Assurance that her heart and mine

Have met in close embrace,

And so her wishes I regard,

Nor seek to change her mood,

But love her all the more

Because she is a prude.

J. P.—LEGAL.—As your friend, according to your statement, wishes to violate his agreement, he will have to be careful, or the landlord may be able to cause him a good deal of expense and trouble. The right thing for him to do would be to speak to the landlord and make some new arrangement. We have no sympathy with any one who wishes surreptitiously to evade an agreement.

EXPECTANT.—You had better tell her how you feel, and that it is your expectation that you will love her by and by. She can then act intelligently in the matter. Could you not hurry a little? Seriously, we cannot advise any man to offer half a heart to a true woman, and if a true woman is wise she will reject such an offer, no matter what advantages accompany it. No one can sid you on this affair till you know yourself.

G.—The Jesuits were the first gold discoverers in California; but they kept the secret to themselves for centuries. Among the moderns, the first to make the grand discovery was a Captain Sutter, an American settler in the newly-acquired territory.

EMMA P.—In their own language, the Hungarians are called Magyars, and their origin is involved in some obscurity. The older writers represent them as derived from the Huns of Attila. Some suppose, from some resemblance in the language, that they are of Finian origin. A distinguished Hungarian writer derives them from the Parthians. They appear to have emigrated from Asia into Europe towards the end of the eleventh century. They were converted to Christianity about the year 1000. Hungary lies between Austria and Turkey. The population is about ten millions.

BABE HOWLIE, a seaman in the Royal Navy, considered good looking by his messmates, height 5 ft. 5 in., dark hair and blue eyes, wishes to correspond with a young lady about twenty, good looking and fond of home and children.

MARY, twenty-nine, fair complexion, wishes to meet with a kind husband; she has nothing to offer but a true loving heart to a good husband.

LOVELY LIZZIE, dark hair and eyes, nineteen, would like to correspond with one of our gentlemen readers;

respondent must be tall and of a loving disposition. A resident of Woolwich preferred.

BRUNNICK, a mechanic, thirty, tall, dark complexion and blue eyes, fond of home and considered good looking, would like to correspond with a young lady from twenty to twenty-five with a view to matrimony; respondent must be tall, dark and good looking, who would study the comforts of home and thoroughly domesticated.

J. H. A., a working man, widower, forty-two, no income and a small income from cottage property wishes to correspond with some respectable woman from thirty to forty with a view to matrimony.

M. C., a tradesman between nineteen and twenty, rather tall and fair, fond of dancing would like to correspond with an amiable young lady about seventeen or eighteen.

DASHING DICK, a seaman in the Royal Navy, hazel eyes and not brown hair, of a loving disposition would like to correspond with a young lady of a loving disposition and fond of dancing with a view to matrimony.

JAMES, a worser man, twenty-three, is desirous of meeting with a loving little woman with a view to matrimony.

EDITH, eighteen, brown hair and eyes, rather tall and of a loving disposition; respondent must be dark, of a loving disposition and fond of home and children.

FANNY, nineteen, fair and considered pretty, would like to meet with a gentleman in a good position and about her own age.

EDWIN, twenty-five, medium height, would like to correspond with an amiable young lady about twenty, who is of a loving disposition, with a view to matrimony.

GEORGE, twenty, medium height, fair, blue eyes, light whiskers and moustache, would like to correspond with a dark young lady with a view to matrimony.

ERASMI, eighteen, medium height, fair, domesticated and fond of home wishes to correspond with a young gentleman about twenty.

JOSEPH, twenty-four, tall, dark hair and eyes, considered very good looking would like to correspond with a fair young lady pretty and interesting.

EKLES and JANE, two friends, wish to correspond with two very respectable young men; tradesmen preferred. Helen is twenty-two, rather tall, dark hair and eyes, of a loving disposition, thoroughly domesticated. Jane is twenty-one, medium height, fair hair, gray eyes, amiable disposition, thoroughly domesticated.

GALLANT MAST and SKY SAIL, two seamen in the Royal Navy, holding good positions, wish to correspond with two young ladies between nineteen and twenty-one. Gallant Mast is twenty-five, medium height, dark complexion, hazel eyes and brown curly hair. Sky Sail is twenty-one, fair complexion, medium height, black curly hair, blue eyes, considered good looking.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

KELLY is responded to by—G. P., twenty-nine, an orphan and a dressmaker by trade, and think she is all he requires.

LOWLY GIRL, by—J. R. H., a widower, with four nice children.

KELLY by—Selina, thirty-seven.

NELLIE by—George G., tall, dark and considered good looking, fond of home.

J. H. by—Jane, thirty-six, thoroughly domesticated, a widow with no children and thinks she is all he can require.

JOAN by—Kathleen, twenty-nine, medium height, dark hair and eyes, fair complexion and very domesticated who wishes to exchange carte-de-visite.

JAMES A. C. by—Kathleen, twenty-nine, of medium height, fair complexion and thoroughly domesticated and thinks she is all he requires.

KATE by—M. W., twenty-six, short and brown hair and very domesticated.

A. C. by—E. W., twenty-six, rather short, fair and cheerful, a good housekeeper.

JIM and TOPSAIL by—Lizzie and Lena, two sisters. Lizzie is twenty, light complexion would like to correspond with Jim. Lena is nineteen, dark complexion and fond of home and singing, and would prefer Topsail. Both will come into money when of age.

JONES by—Clara, twenty-five, tall and dark, a good scholar and would make a good wife.

R. M. by—Marjorie, nineteen, who is tall, fair and considered good looking and affectionate and thinks she is all he requires.

MARY by—Philip, twenty-one, fair, rather tall, stout, fond of house, and thinks he is all she requires.

LOVING TOM by—Pretty Polly, twenty, light hair, blue eyes, fair complexion, of a loving disposition, and fond of home.

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